

PUNJAB HISTORY CONFERENCE

(41st SESSION)
MARCH 14-16, 2009

PROCEEDINGS



PUBLICATION BUREAU
PUNJABI UNIVERSITY, PATIALA



Delegates present in the Punjab History Conference March-2009

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Punjabi University, Patiala.
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PUNJAB HISTORY CONFERENCE
41st Session

Patron

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PREFACE

We are extremely delighted to present Proceedings of the forty-first Session of the Punjab History Conference held on March 14-16, 2009. Increasing participation of both young and veteran scholars is too a matter of gratification and points to the realization of the objective of instituting this Forum i.e. to provide platform to the beginners and disseminate latest findings in the history of the region to the scholars/researchers and general readers.

True to the traditions set up since 13th session of the Punjab History Conference, the Theme of the session was : **The Concept of Martial Race and The Sikhs**. The idea was to examine, how, why and when the concept of Martial Race came into being and to what extent it was manipulated to the furtherance of the Imperial interests by the colonial rulers. However, out of 108 papers presented during the session nearly more than dozen relate directly or indirectly to the theme.

The session was presided over by Dr. Jaspal Singh, an eminent Sikh scholar and Vice-Chancellor of Punjabi University, Patiala. Inaugural address was delivered by Professor Imtiaz Ahmed, J.N.U., New Delhi. Professor Binay Bhushan Chaudhury, formerly Professor of History, University of Calcutta, Calcutta; Professor Kum Kum Roy, Centre for Historical Studies, J.N.U., New Delhi; Dr. Madanjit Kaur, formerly Professor and Dean Religious Studies, G.N.D.U. Amritsar; Professor Sunita Pathania, formerly Professor of History Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra and Dr. Harbans Kaur Sagoo, Principal Guru Nanak Khalsa College, Delhi presided over the Ancient, Medieval, Modern and Punjabi sections respectively. Professor Sita Ram Kohli Memorial Lecture, was delivered by Professor Amar Farooqui, Department of History, Delhi University, Delhi. He spoke on 'Collaboration, Conflict and Empire : Narcotics and the Genesis of the Indian Capitalist Class'. It was well attended and applauded by the audience.

Like the previous years we have been able to publish majority of the papers presented in the session. Though we feel that the younger scholars need more labour to prepare their research papers to enhance the quality of research-work, yet these have been included to encourage them to initiate in the field of historical research.

(iv)

PUNJAB HISTORY CONFERENCE—41ST SESSION

We are grateful to our worthy Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Jaspal Singh who took keen interest not only in the organization of this session but was instrumental in its success too.

Also, we are grateful to the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi to sanction grant for both holding of the conference and to get its proceedings published.

Our thanks are due also to the members of the Advisory Board for their valuable suggestions and S. Charanjit Singh, who worked hard around the clock to bring out this volume in time. Professor, S.K. Sharma, Head Publication Bureau and S. Harjit Singh of the Bureau too deserve our thanks for their keen interest in printing this volume.

March 2, 2010

K.S. BAJWA

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General Presidential Address

BACKGROUND TO LAND REFORMS IN POST
INDEPENDENCE BENGAL: SHIFTS IN THE
PREDOMINANT MODES OF LAND CONTROL AND
APPROPRIATION IN COLONIAL BENGAL

*Professor Binay Bhushan Chaudhuri**

The Department of Punjab Historical Studies of Punjabi University, Patiala has done me a great honour by inviting me to deliver the Presidential address at the 41st session of Punjab History Conference. I sincerely thank the Department for the kindness.

Much as I would have liked to choose for the address a subject related to the Conference theme-'Concept of Martial Race and the Sikhs'- I regret I could not do it, because I am not competent to do it. I do feel the subject of the address may still be of some interest to the Conference. Though a study of the agrarian society of just one British Indian Province, Bengal, the questions it seeks to answer are of a general nature. How did colonial rule impinge on the relations of power in the rural society of the region where it started first and where an altogether new polity and economy gradually took shape?

(1)

Land reforms marked a turning point in the rural history of post-colonial Bengal. The address, entitled 'Shifts in the predominant modes of land control and appropriation in colonial Bengal' analyses the background to the land reforms. Land control and appropriation of peasant surplus are related themes. Land control was an instrument of the appropriation.

We concentrate on two modes of control, 'zamindari' power and sharecropping. Zamindari control was exercised primarily through rent, and the control had its limits to the extent that rent could not be increased beyond a certain limit. Zamindars had a right to claim rent not because they had anything like 'ownership' of land. Their so-called 'property right' was basically a right to the rental income from the lands included in their estates. Sharecropping was an altogether new mode of land control and appropriation of peasant

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surplus. The primary source of *jotedars'* control over sharecroppers was ownership of the lands they leased out to sharecroppers, who *generally* also cultivated their own holdings. *Jotedars'* control was stronger where they also controlled supply of rural credit.

(2)

Our study is restricted to the two modes of land control, because they figured prominently in the post-1947 agrarian reforms and also, strikingly, in the first major official blueprint for the reforms, the *Report of the Floud Commission* (1940). The Commission recommended two major reforms: 'zamindari abolition', abolition of the institution of zamindari, i.e. removal of all intermediaries between the State and 'the actual cultivator of the soil', and legal protection for sharecroppers, long kept wholly outside the purview of the country's land laws. The first was carried out after Independence without much effective opposition from the zamindar class. The second was fiercely opposed by assorted vested interests, and the idea was abandoned. It was only in the 1970s that the law clearly distinguished sharecroppers from day labourers and recognized their rightful position in land. The Commission's recommendation that the share in the peasant produce be reduced from one-half to one-third was also turned down (The principal agenda of the powerful movement of sharecroppers in the 1940s (known as *tebhaga*) was precisely a demand for this reduction).

We omit the question of control over rural credit, a potent instrument of domination over small peasants, because the official agenda of land reforms did not include it. The colonial state tried from time to time, all in vain, to restrict the rural moneylender's control over indebted peasants.

(3)

The central argument of our study of the shifts in the two modes of land control in colonial Bengal is as follows. Zamindari power, once the predominant mode of land control, tended to decline, except where zamindars controlled a sizeable quantity of demesne (*khamar*) land (The typical mode of cultivation, called *ryoti* cultivation, was one where small peasants provided the inputs of agriculture and decided how they would cultivate their lands). On the other hand, sharecropping increasingly became a more powerful mode of land control. The area under sharecropping noticeably increased, especially in the last three or four decades of colonial rule. The number of owner peasants cultivating other persons' lands as sharecroppers vastly increased. The social base of the landowners leasing out their lands on sharecropping agreement became broader too. Larger rental income from sharecropping led various

landowning groups to prefer it to *ryoti* mode of cultivation. The two processes, i.e. decline of zamindari power and the rise and growth of sharecropping system, were, however, largely unrelated. The second owed little to the declining rural authority of zamindars. On the other hand, contrary to an impression, growth of sharecropping had little role in undermining zamindar's rural control.

(4)

In order to explain the decline of zamindari power we need to understand the historical roots of the power, because the specific nature of the roots also set limits to the power. We notice two broad trends in the history. The power tended to increase in the first half of the nineteenth century, except when wider commercial crises (as in 1829-1835 and 1846-47) caused setbacks. In general, signs of decline of the power, due to various causes, increasingly appeared since the 1860s. On the whole, zamindars could not then regain their earlier self-confidence. Indeed, when, especially in the last two decades of colonial rule, critics of the zamindari system blamed on it all the ills in the rural economy, zamindars did not have the moral or intellectual resources to rebut the charge. Their retort that their gross rental income formed only a tiny fraction of the rural wealth cut no ice. Opposition to them, not on sound economic grounds, became increasingly aggressive.

(5)

The institution of zamindari was once believed to have been a colonial creation. The argument is questionable. The institution had long been in existence. The colonial State did not doubt it. It had, however, its doubts about how best it can use the class for its benefit. This cost the zamindars dear. The initial steps of the State (1761-1789) greatly weakened their rural authority and control. In deciding how much the State would claim as revenue from the villages, it distrusted the zamindars' estimate of the actual agricultural resources, and preferred to rely on outsiders, mostly fortune seekers and alien to the villages. The State paid dearly for its indiscretion. The outsiders, wildly miscalculating the peasants' ability to pay, nearly ruined the countryside, and thereby impoverished the zamindars. The outsiders' presence also undermined the rural control of zamindars, which they took long to retrieve. Realized its mistakes and finding out that the traditional rural authority of zamindars would surely help it in realizing its revenue demand punctually, the State fully restored most zamindars. The Permanent Settlement of 1793, which formalized the restoration, helped zamindars rebuild their rural authority. The State's recognition of their traditional position of power in the rural society

was of course a great source of their confidence. The State's 'solemn' pledge to fix for ever its revenue demand from zamindars also strengthened the rural base of their power. It reassured zamindars while planning estate management. The Settlement of 1793 was also basically a plan for making landed property safe and attractive, which in the long run would stabilize the State's fiscal base. The State was therefore keen to ensure that access to landed property did not remain restricted to a closed social group. Larger circulation of landed property among social groups immensely added to its market value. The permanent fixation of land revenue demand attracted to purchase of estates considerable liquid capital unproductively used earlier in other ways. Auction sales of estates for realization of land revenue arrears stimulated the process of this transfer of indigenous capital to purchase of landed property. The auction sales, historians once believed, did not do much to broaden the social base of landed aristocracy, because, they argued, land 'circulated' mostly among the 'traditional rural elites' and resourceful outsiders had limited access to the land market, especially during the period 1793-1819. This surely restricted the growth of a 'free' market in land. The conclusion is questionable. 'Traditional elites', especially rival zamindars, and persons associated with the bureaucracy of zamindars and the State's district administration, did initially succeed more in the still imperfect land market. They could then use underhand means to manipulate auction sales. This comparative advantage did not continue for long, and moneyed people, of course including outsiders, increasingly made their influence felt in the market. Regardless of the social composition of the 'new men', auction sales of estates made possible the rise of an altogether new class of zamindars. Some zamindari families did grievously suffer from the severity of the laws for realization of revenue arrears. Auction sales destroyed or crippled quite a few of them. However, the zamindari system as a whole emerged stronger in the long run. The threat of auction sales also prompted at least some listless old zamindars to modernize and streamline estate management. Coercive laws of the State to make easier rent collection by zamindars, especially in the years 1793-1859, contributed most toward consolidation of their rural power.

(4.2)

The power declined over the years, though it was far from defunct. The decline had both economic and social roots. The social roots were, principally, growing anti-zamindar sentiments in the village. This was partly due to widespread peasant agitations against rent increase by zamindars. Rise of a broad-based gentry, combining professions and landed interests, inevitably

affected the old position of landlords as 'natural leaders' in the rural society. The moral foundations of zamindari authority were thus increasingly questioned. However, a consistent social and political philosophy justifying 'zamindari abolition' did not appear until the decade of the Great Depression (1929-1936).

The economic roots of decline of zamindar's rural authority were more complex in nature. A crucial one was their negligible direct involvement in agriculture and their sole reliance on peasant rent as the principal source of their income. The power declined where, for various reasons, the rental income could not grow beyond a certain point. Zamindars' direct participation in agriculture was mostly restricted to their demesne (*khas*) lands, which formed a small fraction of the total cultivation in the village. The scale of the participation was larger in the first few years after the Permanent Settlement, when about one-third of the village land still lay waste. Zamindars had a role in arranging their reclamation, for which they relied on resourceful entrepreneurs, including rich farmers and merchants. Zamindars did gain initially from the new cultivation. However, the presence in the village of these powerful groups made it increasingly difficult for zamindars to increase their rental income. British laws (especially Act X of 1859 and the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885), strengthened the position of these rival groups. They gradually became resourceful enough to induce zamindars, through large initial payments, to grant them 'perpetual leases', which really meant freezing of zamindars' rental income for ever. Enlargement of estates could partly have offset the loss. However, the near drying up of the land market, due to the declining number of auction sales of estates, and their rising market prices, limited the option. On the other hand, zamindars often failed, due to the incompetence of their local bureaucracy (*amlahs*), to make proper use of the legally admissible grounds of rent increase, such as increased cultivation, growth of cultivation of more remunerative market crops and rising agricultural prices. European indigo planters, who were also zamindars, were the only persons who succeeded in increasing rent rates on ground of a rise in agricultural prices. Their accurate knowledge of the village society and economy made their machinery of rural control far more efficient. Zamindars' rental income could not grow beyond a limit also because of a declining trend in the rural economy, called 'agrarian crisis' by historians, such as George Blyn, M.M. Islam and Tirthankar Roy, especially since the first decade of the twentieth century. The income remained nearly frozen where agriculture stagnated, that is, where the increase in the acreage and productivity was negligible. While zamindars had thus only limited means of increasing the

rental income, several developments, beyond their control, substantially reduced it. One was the rising commodity prices, especially since the famine of 1896-97. The rise meant that zamindars' *real* income fell. Their difficulties abruptly worsened in the Depression decade (1929-1937). Crash in agricultural prices inevitably affected peasants' ability to pay rent. Organized political agitations of the time, in the form of a 'no-rent movement' in several places, compounded zamindars' predicament. *In the long run*, zamindars' difficulties reflected the growing crisis in the region's agrarian economy in the last four decades of colonial rule. We may refer to M.M. Islam's statistical analysis of Bengal's agrarian economy of the period 1920-1942.

The question which critics of the zamindari system did not honestly face was whether the system alone had generated the crisis. They blamed the crisis on the system and simply inferred that the crisis would go away with the abolition of the system. Zamindars, with moral foundations of their rural control badly battered, failed to contest even this weak logic.

(5)

On the other hand, there was a strong case for bringing sharecroppers within the ambit of the country's law. Government, first in the 1920s and again in 1940, recommended it. Landed groups, powerful enough to control the legislative process, scuttled it.

While zamindari power declined, landowners (generally called *jotedars*) consolidated their control over sharecroppers. The control primarily derived from the ownership of the lands they leased out to sharecroppers, with control over rural credit often reinforcing it. Sharecroppers, notably, also generally cultivated their own lands. This duality of sharecropper's status, as owner and as tenant, made it a distinctive category in the peasant economy. The duality distinguished him from a mere 'labourer', called *krishan* or *mahindar*, and also from a cultivator of zamindars' demesne lands. He was not a pure 'labourer', as opponents of any plan for treating him as a 'tenant' qualifying for protection under the law described him. He could control part of the cultivation process because he provided a portion of the inputs of agriculture—bullocks, ploughs, seeds and of course land. The rural society clearly recognized the distinction. Compared to a *krishan* a sharecropper had a superior social status.

(5.1)

Origins of sharecropping have been variously explained. We would here briefly comment on four leading explanations, and say how ours differs. We would argue that the origins significantly varied over time, and we try to relate the variations with some broad trends in the wider economy.

One explanation is basically revisionist in nature. It contests a general assumption that sharecropping is an indicator of peasant decline, decline in the sense that small peasants, once possessing the necessary inputs of agriculture, somehow lost this position of strength and came to depend on landowners or rich farmers for land and other means of production. It argues that sharecropping was not just small peasants' survival strategy. It often was a rational response of peasants to the new conditions favourable to agriculture created by the changing 'commercial climate' of the time, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century. Peasants could respond in two possible ways: increasing the area under cultivation or intensifying the farming. In an economy where land was scarce, it was only through leasing in of land as sharecropper that they could make use of the market opportunities.

The second explanation, generally known as *jotedari* thesis, argues that sharecropping was not at all a colonial innovation, and had come into existence much earlier. It questions the widespread assumption that zamindars had ever constituted a significant component of the rural power structure. Zamindari was primarily a rent-collecting organization; the real power in the village, goes the argument, lay with the community of rich farmers, called *jotedars*. They were the 'real landlords in effective possession of land and labour within the village'. They also controlled money-lending, money-changing and grain dealing within the village. This they did in pre-colonial times too. They dominated the bulk of the agricultural population, classified as 'untouchable landless groups in the village', often cultivating land as sharecroppers.

Sharecropping, concludes another explanation, was a characteristically northern Bengal phenomenon; it flourished mostly in the region of new cultivation organized by large holders (*jotedars*), and had a weak base in the zamindari domain, that is, where the zamindari power was the dominant mode of land control.

The most popular explanation of sharecropping relates it to 'expropriation' of small owner peasants, i.e. steady loss of peasant lands to their creditors or zamindars, who usually allowed the peasants to continue cultivating the lost lands on a sharecropping basis.

(5.2)

All the four explanations are only partially valid. We briefly comment on them here and elaborate our arguments later.

First explanation : There were cases where favourable market conditions induced peasants to lease in land for cultivation as sharecroppers in order to build up a more efficient unit of farming. This, however, is mostly

true of relatively resourceful peasants. Our study of the typical origins of share-cropping would show that the motive behind renting of lands from other landowners was not to have a substantial marketable surplus. The usual terms of sharecropping often precluded this possibility. The rental demand, generally half of the gross produce apart from other petty exactions, was simply extortionate. Favourable market conditions did stimulate agriculture at times. The market demand, however, was not stable and widely fluctuated. As we would see later, the most common background to sharecropping in the late nineteenth century and later was the growing peasant need for more land in the context of the region's stagnating agrarian economy. The availability of land then diminished to insignificance. Agricultural productivity was negligible. The market of peasant crops, including rice and jute, shrank. On the other hand, population rapidly increased, especially since 1919-20. The need for land was greater where peasants lost lands to their creditors and others. Sharecropping, typically, was a strategy of small peasants for survival.

Second explanation : The *jotedari* thesis argues, correctly, that the sources of control of zamindars and *jotedars*, significantly differed. However, it errs in overstating the extent of *jotedars'* rural control. It was far from pervasive. It also ignores the distinctive origins of sharecropping in colonial times.

Third explanation : The northern Bengal type of sharecropping was not the only type; it was a distinctive type emerging at a certain point of time, especially in the later nineteenth century, under particular historical conditions. The colonial State, having under its direct control a vast amount of reclaimable land, ceded by the Government of Bhutan in 1866, could choose resourceful enterprising farmers for grants of huge chunks of such lands. Growth of a large domestic market of rice also encouraged the latter to invest capital in the new cultivation. The real difficulty for them in this regard was the availability of labour. They mostly relied on immigrant labour force from the regions around. Sharecropping was the typical form of utilization of the labour.

Fourth explanation : Loss of lands to peasants' creditors or to zamindars resulting from defaults of debts or rent did not occur on the same scale throughout our period. It became particularly noticeable in the first four decades of the twentieth century. Other origins of sharecropping need not be ignored.

(5.3)

The emphasis in our study is on the changing nature of the origins of sharecropping in colonial Bengal. The system did exist earlier too. However,

its particular origins then suggest that this mode of cultivation formed a small part of the total cultivation. The mode was mostly confined to a particular type of land- zamindar's demesne lands (called *khamar* or *khas*). These were all rent free lands originating in two ways. Partly gifts from the State they included a substantial amount of reclaimable waste land. The State's purpose obviously was encouraging local zamindars to increase cultivation. Other kinds of gifts were intended as sources of income to be spent on maintenance of social or cultural institutions. Part of the rent-free lands originated where zamindars, in collusion with the village headmen or other village officials, removed some lands duly assessed by the State from the 'rented' category to rent-free. They had a clear gain from the manipulation. Customarily they had complete control over the cultivation of the demesne lands. Typically, the mode of cultivation was not direct participation in the cultivation process through a system of hired labour. This they usually avoided, because they found it difficult to supervise scattered patches of such cultivation, and also because this mode cost them more than entrusting the cultivation to cultivators possessing necessary inputs of cultivation, such as labour, ploughs and cattle. They preferred to lease out such lands to cultivators on a share-cropping basis. Peasants too were eager to cultivate them because zamindars offered more liberal terms of rent for cultivation of the rent-free lands.

The share-cropping system as it developed during the colonial times had strikingly different origins. The system is causally related to small peasant dependence on more resourceful rural groups for part of the essential means of production. The nature of the dependence varied over time. Two broad trends are noticeable in this. In the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century the major dependence was not so much for land as for what contemporary official reports called 'agricultural stock', that is, inputs of agriculture other than land. A distinct shift tended to occur since the late nineteenth century. The dependence then was mostly for land. Our study traces the variations in the background to the dependence at different points of time. We have tried to relate the variations with broad trends in the wider agrarian economy.

(5.4)

We notice three major phases in the growing peasant dependence on other landowners for land.

In the first a considerable increase in new cultivation occurred. This, however, did not at all strengthen the position of cultivators as owners. On the contrary, the particular organization of the large-scale reclamation controlled

by resourceful entrepreneurs directly created conditions where cultivators, largely immigrants from other regions, provided the necessary labour merely as sharecroppers.

The new cultivation in the first four decades after the devastating famine of 1789-90 was notably not really new. It mostly was the restoration of the lost land because of the demographic reverses caused by the famine. Whatever the form of the new cultivation, the result was peasant dependence on resourceful groups organizing the restoration of the deserted villages (called *lokshan jotes*) in contemporary records.) In fact, compared to pre-famine years, the form of the dependence was worse, because the cultivators providing labour for the restoration were all utterly destitute.

In the second phase, except in some northern Bengal districts, with which we would deal separately, the new cultivation slowed down and diminished to insignificance by about the second decade of the twentieth century. The declining land availability inevitably affected peasants too, and made them more dependent on powerful landed groups for land. Several developments compounded their difficulties from land shortage. Particularly notable were population growth, especially since the 1920s; rising trend of agricultural prices since the famine of 1896-99, bigger rise in industrial prices compared to agricultural prices at times (for instance, the first World War period and the post-War years, 1918-1921), falling agricultural productivity, except in cases of some commercial crops, and the shrinking market of peasant crops.

Zamindars too, in this second historical period, preferred, for two diverse reasons, sharecropping to usual cultivation by small owner peasants (*ryoti* cultivation). The reason in parts of western Bengal was inadequate labour supply, resulting from considerable population decline there and also from ecological degradation leading to peasant desertion of villages. The result was dependence on migrant labour. It was the employment of this labour on a share-cropping basis that suited zamindars most. Secondly, zamindars struggling hard to prevent a decline in their *real* rental income in the context of rising commodity prices, wanted money rent changed into produce rent. Given the rising agricultural prices rent collected in produce fetched a larger income.

In the third historical period, roughly the last four decades of colonial rule, the decisive cause of increasing peasant dependence for land was steady loss of peasant lands to creditors or landlords. 'Transfers' of peasant holdings had already been occurring on a considerable scale since the 1890s. Their number abruptly increased in the period of the long agrarian crisis: the

Depression decade (1929-37), the War years (1939-1945) and the Famine years (1943-45)

We now take up the three historical periods and see how the sharecropping system came to be consolidated.

The new cultivation **in the first period**, as we have said above, had two distinct types. In the villages ravaged by the famine of 1789-90 it actually was restoration of the lost lands. They were mostly small holdings of peasants who perished during the famine. They also lay scattered, some within the villages and some on their outskirts. There was however abundant waste land, while labour was scarce and the availability of agricultural inputs other than land limited. Several rural groups took the leading role in the reclamation process: zamindars having their finances crippled by the famine; relatively rich farmers who even could enlarge their holdings at the cost of nearly destitute farmers; a resourceful group organizing the migration of labour from the relatively less affected neighbourhood and rice merchants who found their control over the new cultivation greatly helpful in stabilizing their grain trade. There was not much of a sustained revival in the commercial economy at the time which stimulated the new agricultural enterprise and investment in new cultivation. Except for the rice traders, other leading groups were more interested in the revitalization of agriculture. The interest of zamindars lay in the reorganization of their battered finances. Rich farmers found in the post-famine conditions an opportunity to strengthen their control over part of the rural economy. Impoverished farmers badly needing vital means of production other than land found in crop-sharing system the best possible means to resume cultivation of their petty holdings.

The second type of large-scale new cultivation in the first historical period had a different nature, and some of its features had a direct bearing on the growth of the share-cropping system. **(A)** The source of the stimulus to the agricultural enterprise and investment in the reclamation was strikingly different. The primary source was the expanding domestic market of rice, and this demand was largely urban in origins. It largely came from the metropolis of Calcutta and the semi-urban neighbourhood growing around it. Rural demand generated by any increase of population had a negligible role. **(B)** Two vital aspects of the new cultivation that the growing rice market stimulated helped the sharecropping system grow in altogether new areas. The bigness of the scale of new reclamation and the difficult topography of its sites making the reclamation an immensely expensive process implied that only big resourceful groups had the sufficient capital to organize it. **(C)** Another crucial feature of

the reclamation process was the source of the required labour. The sites of the reclamation were all far away from settled peasant villages and the entrepreneurs had therefore to rely wholly on migrant labour, which also had a distinctive social composition. **Two determinants** of the new sharecropping system there were thus big entrepreneurs' control over the reclamation process and the predominance of migrant labour force, all coming from economically and socially weak communities.

A few instances would illustrate our argument. We would also add a brief note on the rise and growth of the sharecropping system in some northern Bengal districts, which, as we have said above, was a distinctive one.

The new cultivation, away from the tract ravaged by the famine of 1789, occurred first, in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, in Chittagong, a remote district in the eastern frontier of Bengal and, on a larger scale, in the Sunderbans forest area in southern Bengal. Labour scarcity kept the pace of reclamation slow in Chittagong. It was the difficult topography that impeded the reclamation process in the Sunderbans. The new cultivation here remained insecure without a large investment in embankments to prevent saline sea water from inundating and destroying the fertility of the rice land. Cultivation noticeably increased, especially since the middle of the nineteenth century, largely due to the expanding rice market.

Elsewhere too the market of the magic worked. Even local zamindars responded to the market stimulus. The more important role was that of rice traders and resourceful persons leasing in large blocs of waste land (called *lots* in the Sunderbans), initially more interested in rental income than in accessing the rice market.

Apart from Chittagong and the Sunderbans, there were five principal sites of this vigorous agricultural enterprise: Madhupur Jungle in the northern part of Dhaka; the large *Barind* tract included in three districts, Rajshahi, Dinajpur and Maldah; some Northern Bengal areas like the Duars, Kooch Bihar and Dinajpur; Jungle Mahal in western Midnapur and the huge swamp lying in the southern part of the eastern Bengal district of Faridpur.

Local labour for the cultivation in these sites, all far away from the old settled peasant tract, was inadequate or not available at all. The entrepreneurs could not do without migrant labour. Except in a few cases, its social composition had a distinctive form. It was overwhelmingly *adivasi* (tribal) labour. Even in these exceptional cases, it was not traditional peasant labour. Its source was semi-Hinduized *adivasi* communities or cultivators belonging to the lowest strata in the Hindu caste hierarchy, sometimes just untouchables

having no recognized status in the caste system. The two exceptions were the vast swamp in southern Faridpur and the Madhupur Jungle in northern part of Dhaka. The labour reclaiming the swamp was mostly provided by untouchable *Namasudras* (A small *Namasudra* group was better off and even owned land.). In the Madhupur Jungle, an extremely infertile and famine-prone tract, the cultivators were identified in the Census Reports as *Mangoloid* tribes, normally practising a kind of shifting cultivation. In the northern Bengal districts too, especially in the newly acquired (1866) Duars area, the local semi-Hinduized *adivasi* groups, such as the Koch, Mech and Rabba, did have a role in the new cultivation. However this was far too inadequate for the quickly increasing cultivation.

The predominant labour force in other sites of new cultivation was *adivasi* labour, generally from southern Bihar. This was a strikingly new trend in the peasant economy of Bengal. The *adivasi* world even earlier was far from segregated from the peasant villages. The novel trend now was its increasing integration in Bengal's peasant economy, so much so that the new class of sharecroppers were mostly composed of *adivasis*.

It was not growth of *adivasi* population alone that led to the migration. *Adivasis* did migrate, especially where, as in the Oraon country, the pace of agricultural growth was much slower than population growth. The decisive reason was their shrinking access to their village resources, including forest products, because of the increasing alien control over them. The weakening of the *adivasi* village organization, which traditionally controlled access to the village resources, contributed to the process. Census reports found a correlation between the increased scale of *adivasi* migration, especially since the 1870s, and the declining *adivasi* economy and village organization. This was noticeable even in the *adivasi*-populated area, now controlled by outsiders. For instance, in the Silda pargana in the Jungle Mahal in Western Midnapur, which was then controlled by the Midnapur Zamindari Company, the old-type Santal agricultural settlements, all following the norms of the traditional Santal village organization, nearly disappeared. The Santals employed by the Company for new cultivation were practically all sharecroppers, having a tenuous right in the lands that they cultivated.

(5.5)

The sharecropping system as it developed in parts of northern Bengal had some distinctive features.. We concentrate on the Duars region, ceded to the British by Bhutan in 1866 and included in the new Jalpaiguri district formed in 1869.

Government here directly controlled a huge area, having no constraints to face from pre-existing property structure prevailing in other parts of Bengal. It preferred leasing out large blocks of it to 'giant' holders. *Ryoti* cultivation based on small peasant property did not suit its needs. In fact the kind of speculation in land that now developed sharply increased land prices, putting it beyond the small holders' ability to lease in any land.

For the giant holders it was all a pure commercial proposition. In fact some of them had already been active in the rice trade. The agricultural market had been growing fast. The factors in this were the rapid growth of tea plantation, the need for a large supply of rice for the plantation labour, the gradual opening out of the relatively closed region as a result of all these and the expanding railway network. The rising trend in agricultural prices reflected all these.

The reorganization of the agricultural system radically transformed the traditional form of labour utilization in agriculture, controlled then by a group also called *jotedars*, who were all small holders. The influx of the giant holders nearly led to their elimination. The large-scale new cultivation requiring a vastly increased labour supply also completely undermined the old sharecropping system, where local semi-Hinduized *adivasi* groups prominently figured. The major source of labour now was immigrant cultivators, often destitute farmers. The 'dependency' relations thus created in the rural society were reinforced by the new *jotedars'* control over the supply of rural credit.

(6)

How organization of new cultivation controlled by big resourceful entrepreneurs contributed to spread of sharecropping system has been explained above. The system grew in other ways even where the new cultivation was negligible. The growth was connected with new trends in the economy.

In parts of western Bengal, such as Burdwan, Beerbhoom and Bankura, zamindars' demesne lands, different in nature from those in the late pre-colonial period, was one important site of a new form of sharecropping. Demesne (*khamar*) lands in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century were mostly rent-free lands. In the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century they had different origins. It was scarcity of labour that obliged zamindars to choose sharecropping as a mode of cultivation of such lands, because labour scarcity reduced the area under *ryoti* cultivation. Labour became scarce for various reasons. The crucial one was severe demographic reverses due to recurring outbreaks of malaria and the disastrous influenza epidemic of 1918. The diseases also devitalized the survivors and affected their labour

productivity. Ecological degradation reducing productivity of land and thus leading to peasant desertion of villages also caused the scarcity. The only option now left to zamindars was dependence on utilization of migrant labour, mostly *adivasi*, as sharecroppers.

Elsewhere too zamindars were becoming increasingly keen to replace money rent with produce rent, especially where rising commodity prices affected their real rental income. They were mostly small holders, called tenure-holders in the Tenancy Law, and belonging to the *Bhadralok* community combining professions with landholding as one source of income. The correlation between the two phenomena- rising commodity prices and zamindars' eagerness to choose sharecropping as a form of rent payment, has perhaps been overstated.

(7)

Loss of peasant holdings to moneylenders and zamindars was perhaps the most important cause of the spread of sharecropping system in the first four decades of the twentieth century. The Floud Commission (1940) called it 'commercialization of land'. The background to its anxiety over this most 'disquieting' development in rural Bengal in the recent years was obviously the abrupt increase in the number of transfers of peasant holdings in the Depression Decade (1930s). The trend, however, had already appeared. The Registration Department data show that in the years between 1881 and 1904, 14.5 per cent of the holdings of 'occupancy *ryots*' had been transferred.. On average, the yearly rate of transfers in the first four decades of the twentieth century was between 0.5 per cent to 1 per cent of 'occupancy' holdings. Paradoxically, most of these transfers occurred after the Depression started to lift. The Depression reduced the market value of all commodities, including land. The climate of uncertainty made peasants' creditors hesitant to dispossess the indebted peasants, because this would mean that the capital spent on it might tend to remain frozen. The largest number of transfers of peasant holdings occurred between 1937 and 1945. The decisive causes were the war economy, transfers of fortunes made during the war mostly through dishonest means (such as war contracts and speculation in land and food supply) to purchase of peasant holdings, and the disastrous Bengal famine, 1943-45.

The available data relating to registration of transferred holdings do not correctly reflect the state of peasant destitution. The size of the acreage cultivated by sharecroppers has also been underestimated. The decisive cause, as recent researches have shown, was the sharecroppers' fear that the landowners, their masters and creditors, would retaliate if they disclosed to the official agency the real state of things.

Summary and Conclusions

We have examined two predominant modes of land control and appropriation of peasant surplus in colonial Bengal: zamindari power and sharecropping. The first was exercised in extracting peasant surplus in the form of rent from owner peasants. The landowners' (*jotedars*) control over sharecroppers derived from ownership of the lands cultivated by sharecroppers. It therefore was a more potent mode of land control.

We notice a distinct shift in the two modes of land control. Zamindari power declined. The decline was not just in zamindars' economic power. The moral foundations of their rural authority nearly crumbled too. It was largely because of this that they could not withstand the persistent onslaughts of their critics. In contrast, the roots of the sharecropping system became deeply entrenched in the agrarian society, so much so that vested interests scuttled any move on the part of the government to restrict *jotedars'* power and control.

We have tried to understand these roots. Elements of sharecropping are noticeable even by the beginning of colonial rule. The typical sharecropping system developed in the late nineteenth and the second half of the twentieth century. We have examined four interpretations of its origins in order to clarify how ours differs. One interpretation is of a distinctly revisionist nature. Sharecropping, it has been argued, was not necessarily an index of peasant decline, and was not just small peasants' survival strategy. The argument is questionable. It was valid only where peasants were sufficiently resourceful. Most peasants were not.

Our emphasis is on a shift during colonial rule in the form of small peasant dependence on dominant rural groups. In the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, peasant dependence on landowners or rich peasants was not so much for land as for 'agricultural stock', that is, inputs of agriculture other than land. A notable change occurred since the late nineteenth century. The dependence then was mostly for land.

We have then analysed the major trends in the process.(1) The dependence had of course much to do with the phenomenon of steady loss of peasant lands. This however did not happen on the same scale throughout colonial rule. It was particularly noticeable in the last four decades of the rule.(2) Until the late nineteenth century, growth of sharecropping had, paradoxically, much to do with the organization of large-scale reclamation in several parts of Bengal. The organization controlled by resourceful entrepreneurs, directly created conditions where cultivators, mostly immigrants from other areas, provided the necessary labour merely as sharecroppers.

(3) Growth of sharecropping system in some north Bengal districts, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Bihar, had different origins. The background to the growth was not expropriation of small peasant owners, but increasing integration of the local peasant economy with an altogether new kind of commercialized economy based on large -scale new cultivation controlled by a new class of 'giant' landowners (*jotedars*). Because of the acute scarcity of local labour, the source of the required labour power for the new cultivation was mostly immigrants. It was they who formed the army of the sharecroppers. (4) The general background to the growth of sharecropping in the first four decades of the twentieth century was the growing peasant need for more land in the context of the region's stagnating agrarian economy. Land availability then diminished to insignificance. Agricultural productivity was nearly stagnant. The market of peasant crops, including rice and jute, shrank. On the other hand, population rapidly increased, especially since 1919-20. For small and marginal peasants sharecropping then was a survival strategy.

We confront a paradox at the end of our study. Opponents of the zamindari system blamed Bengal's agrarian crisis in the later decades of colonial rule wholly on the system, and defended its abolition primarily on this ground. The assumption is untenable. On the other hand, sharecropping system, which tended to undermine the base of small peasant economy, continued unscathed and prospered, even in the three decades after independence.

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Presidential Address

(Ancient Section)

CONTEXTUALIZING THE IDEAL OF THE MARTIAL
GOD—INDRA AND AGNI IN THE EARLY
VEDIC TRADITION

*Professor Kumkum Roy**

Honorable President, colleagues and friends,

It is indeed a great honour to be invited to preside over the ancient Indian section of the Punjab History Conference. Some of the most eminent scholars in the discipline have, in the past, presided over this Conference. Unlike them, I have virtually no claims to being a specialist in the history of the Punjab in particular or even in regional history in general. I have also little or no claim to being a specialist on martial traditions, the theme of this particular Conference. However, I thought I would use this opportunity to explore the possibilities of the existence of such a tradition in the earliest texts of the subcontinent. The working understanding of the martial that I propose to use is that it is like almost all modes of constructing social identities, relational—one can be martial only with reference to others who are perceived or represented as less martial. These others may be women; they may also be other men. I would also suggest that the martial ideal needs to be understood in terms of other ideals that may co-exist with it. These ideals may appear complementary; they may also occasionally appear to be conflictual.

Historians investigating religious traditions suggest that the ways in which deities are visualized often provides us with insights into notions that are valorized in the human context. With this possibility in mind, I will attempt to investigate a textual tradition that many of us would tend to localize in the Punjab and use this opportunity to revisit discussions on the ways in which gods were visualized within the early Vedic tradition, focusing in particular, on the two principal deities within the pantheon, Agni and Indra. The question that we will explore, through an analysis of the ways in which these gods are

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represented, is whether the attribute of being martial automatically translated into high social status.

At the risk of stating certain well-worn facts, we may recollect that the *Rgveda* consists of over a thousand hymns or *sūktas*, a Sanskrit term that literally means well-said. Most, though not all these hymns were composed in praise of the principal deities—in particular Agni, Indra and Soma, with over seven hundred hymns being addressed to them. The entire set of compositions was grouped into ten sections that we know as *maṇḍalas*. Of these, the first and last, each of which contains 191 hymns, are regarded as later additions to the text. Also considered late are the eighth *maṇḍala*, whose authorship is somewhat heterogeneous, and the ninth *maṇḍala*, which consists of an exclusive compilation of hymns addressed to Soma, which would have been used in the soma sacrifice. The core *maṇḍalas*, also known as the family books because the authorship of each is traditionally attributed to a lineage of Vedic seers or *ṛṣis*, consisting of *maṇḍalas* two to seven, are conventionally regarded as the oldest section of the text, and it is this segment that will form the focus of the present discussion.

We can reconstruct the contexts in which the *ṛcas* or *mantras* were used to some extent—many of them seem to have been composed for specific rituals, occasionally at the behest of patrons who wished to earn the favour of the deities. Some, though not all the *mantras*, survived in later usage as well, and were chanted during sacrifices and other rituals. Amongst these long-lived chants are those that form part of the marriage ritual performed according to Vedic norms.

For millennia, the text of the *Rgveda* had an extremely restricted circulation, confined as it was to a limited number of *brāhmaṇas* who painstakingly memorized the text, reiterating each syllable in its exact position, and ensuring that pronunciation was standardized. This mnemonic feat seems virtually unimaginable today, dependent as we are on more transient and porous modes of communication.

Committing the text to memory meant that it was preserved in its pristine purity but was, at the same time, exclusive: only a small group of men with what were regarded as 'proper' claims through birth could acquire knowledge of the text—others, women and men who did not have the resources or were not considered eligible to acquire this esoteric knowledge would have simply heard these chants on ritual occasions, if they were allowed to be present. They may have had a sense that what was being communicated was solemn, capable of moving even the gods, but probably had little understanding of the precise meanings of what was chanted.

If the text was rather exclusive in the early Indian context, how do we account for its overwhelming presence in contemporary understandings of the past? At one level, it is undeniable that the *Rgveda* has acquired a certain centrality in our perceptions of early Indian history. While some of us have attempted to de-centre the text, these efforts have yet to bear fruit in popular, educated middle class perceptions of the text. Let us pause to consider why the text is regarded as significant, evident in the resilience of popular perceptions, as well as the need to contextualize it within a more complex historical framework.

Although the *Rgveda* had been preserved orally for millennia, it received a new incarnation in the colonial context, more particularly in the 19th century. This was the time when, thanks primarily to the efforts of the avowed Indophile Max Muller, the text was first published and then translated into English as well as other European and Indian languages. Print opened up the text to vastly different audiences—those who were receiving western education in the subcontinent, as well as to European scholars, many of whom, such as Max Muller, never visited India. The text thus no longer remained a priestly preserve.

At the same time, the text was valorized as representing the earliest example of literature in an Indo-European language. This made it a matter of pride for several scholars working within the framework of Indian nationalism. In this situation, the Vedas in general and the *Rgveda* in particular were mined in the quest for origins—for the roots of all that was considered valuable—whether in terms of political, social, economic or cultural practices. These ideas culminated in the notion of a Vedic age—the conceptualization of a period where the values, norms and practices evident in this textual tradition were supposed to have held sway over the entire land.

It is only in recent decades that historians and archaeologists have worked to arrive at a more complex picture. On the one hand, the Vedic texts have been carefully localized. Noteworthy in this respect are the recent contributions of Michael Witzel, who has attempted to reconstruct the geography of the Vedic texts on the basis of both the direct mention of and indirect allusions to features such as rivers. We can now work with the assumption that texts such as the *Rgveda* can be contextualized in terms of the northwestern part of the subcontinent, more specifically the area drained by the Indus and its tributaries, both eastern and western. In contrast, the later Vedic texts betray a more easterly orientation, extending to the mid-Ganga valley. What is evident is that in neither case can the textual traditions be projected to suggest that

they were valid for the entire subcontinent.

Archaeologists have also recovered evidence for a wide variety of Neolithic, Chalcolithic and iron-using cultures in different parts of the subcontinent from the second half of the second millennium BCE and through the first millennium BCE. It is evident that while there was contact amongst these cultures, they were not influenced by Vedic traditions. In other words, in the 21st century, it is perhaps time for us to recognize explicitly that the Vedic texts pertain to specific regions, and to examine the ideas they reveal within these spatial contexts. It is within this framework that we can consider the early portions of the *Rgveda* as representing ideas and practices that probably emerged at least partly within the region that we conventionally identify as the Punjab, the area drained by the Indus and its five tributaries. We will also work within the chronological framework that locates the composition of the *Rgveda* in the second half of the second millennium BCE, as opposed to far more speculative earlier dates that have been suggested in recent decades.

There were several strategies for praising and invoking the gods that were adopted by Vedic seers—these included describing their birth, or alluding to the process whereby they were born, providing more or less vivid accounts of the ways in which the physical appearance of the gods could be visualized, alluding to their exploits, and addressing them using a range of terms that were suggestive of power. An analysis of these strategies provides us with insights into the values that were cherished by both priests/composers and patrons. More specifically, we find that the Vedic seers drew on the rich imagery provided by the sacrifice; they also drew on the grammatical peculiarities of Vedic Sanskrit, playing with words that were gendered as masculine and feminine in order to express their ideas. In the process, both Agni and Indra were visualized in complex ways.

II

Birth stories and their significance

Within this framework, our focus, as mentioned earlier, will be on Agni and Indra. As noted earlier, these were amongst the chief deities of the early Vedic pantheon. As we will see, they were visualized as sharing some attributes in common; however, what is equally evident is that they were also conceptualized as distinctive deities. Given that Indra was represented as the prototype of the valorous hero, whereas Agni was depicted as the archetypal priest, a comparison of the ways in which the two deities were described in the course of invocations may allow for insights into the ways in which the heroic, or if we wish martial ideal typified by Indra, was contextualized in the

early Vedic textual tradition. An examination of narratives or allusions to the myths about the birth of the deities provides one possible entry point into this theme.

At the outset, let us examine the way Agni was visualized in the early sections of the *Rgveda*, noting the centrality of Agni to the sacrificial ritual. The deity was regarded as the personification of the sacred fire, into which offerings were poured with suitable chants, and as the means whereby messages could be transmitted from the human to the divine plane. Consequently, and not surprisingly, the deity was identified with the priesthood in general and with the *hotṛ*, the priest who functioned as invoker of the gods in particular.

The hymns addressed to Agni constitute, as we have seen, a substantial proportion of those compiled in the *Rgveda*. Also noteworthy is that they are invariably placed at the beginning of each *maṇḍala*. While this can be explained in terms of the interests and priorities of the priestly compilers, preservers and transmitters of the tradition, it also suggests that the ideas and imagery that developed around the deity were regarded as a crucial component of the early Vedic tradition.

From this perspective, we may explore the way Agni's birth was visualized by the poets. More often than not, this was represented in terms of the deity being produced through two or more mothers (*mātr̥s* e.g. RV V.11.3). To some extent, this imagery derived from the specificities of Vedic ritual as well as the grammatical peculiarities of Vedic Sanskrit. In the ritual, the sacred fire had to be kindled by rubbing two pieces of wood together; in the language, the pieces of wood which were rubbed together were grammatically feminine. Consequently, the appellation *matr* may have seemed both logical and appropriate.

In yet another instance, those who produce Agni are referred to as the ten sisters (*daśa svasṛ*, RV III.29.13). As in the case of producing fire through friction, here we find another instance of ritual practice being described within the context of Vedic Sanskrit, where the fingers used to produce the ritual fire were designated as grammatically feminine.

If these associations suggested that Agni owed his origin to primarily feminine principles, the idea was reinforced by the terminology used to designate the site where the sacrificial fire was set up. Here, there seems to have been a deliberate invocation of female anatomy, evident in the use of the term *yonī* for the sacred space (RV II.9.1) where the ritual fire was kindled and placed. Thus, Agni was visualized as being born from the womb.

As this representation suggests, the notion of the deity being produced by mothers was often expressed in more complex ways. In one instance, the mothers were equated with Usas, the goddess of dawn, and by extension, twilight (RV V.1.4), referring to the two occasions on which the sacrificial fire was to be kindled. More common were the allusions to the deity as Apām Napāt, literally the child of the waters, once again grammatically feminine. This idea that the deity was generated from an element that was its opposite once again indicates the rich diversity and the complex imagery involved in the ways in which deities were visualized.

Agni was also represented as the son of Dyaus and Pṛthivī (RV III.25.1), the heaven and earth, often regarded as father and mother, but also as two mothers (RV III.1.7), and, occasionally, as two fathers (RV III.3.11).

We may conclude that Agni's birth was almost inextricably associated with feminine imagery in the minds of poets, and possibly patrons in the early Vedic context. What is also striking is that the deity was occasionally identified with goddesses (e.g. RV II.1.11).

In contrast to Agni's close bonds with his mothers, who were, as we have seen, imagined in a variety of ways, the birth of Indra, the archetypal warrior god in the early Vedic tradition, was conceptualized in very different terms. He was represented as having emerged from the side of his mother, and depicted as playing an active, dynamic, and if we wish to use the category, martial role in the proceedings—someone who, instead of passively resting in the womb, forced his way out (RV IV.18) into the world.

It is well-known that Indra was often regarded as representative of the *ṛṣatriya*, just as Agni symbolized the priesthood. What is significant is that the myths narrated about Agni's birth, as well as the allusions to his many mothers would indicate that this pivotal deity was conceived of and represented in relatively non-martial terms in comparison to Indra. At the same time, there is no denying that, within the Vedic pantheon, Agni was envisaged as being as powerful, if not more powerful than Indra. Thus, if birth stories are any indication, it is evident that power and martial attributes were not necessarily perceived as being synonymous within the early Vedic tradition.

III

Visualizing the deities

Let us turn now to some of the more literal descriptions of the gods, the physical appearance of the deities as represented by the Vedic seers. As may be expected, most gods were envisaged as luminous. This visualization was particularly vivid in the case of Agni. In one instance (RV II. 10.2) he

was described as being *citra bhānu*, literally of variegated light, with an attractive colour, *sprhya varṇa* (RV II. 10.5). Occasionally, the colours were specified—so the fire that was kindled was described as white; it turned red as it gained in strength (RV III. 1.4). Also, typically, the fire was described as golden, *hiraṇya rūpa* (RV IV.3.1). This luminosity was occasionally attributed to specific elements of the sacrificial fire, which was often conceptualized in anthropomorphic terms. So Agni was represented as possessing a mouth (RV II.1.12), an eye (RV III.26.7), tongue and jaws (RV II.9.1). Expectedly, his teeth were described as golden (RV V.2.3), his limbs as bright (RV III. 1.5), his hair as reddish brown or flaming (RV III.2.13, III.14.1), his beard golden (RV IV.10.6).

Each of these elements could be elaborated in consonance with the flight of poetic fancy. In one instance, the deity was represented as seven-tongued (*sapta jihvā*, RV III.6.2), an obvious allusion to the many tongues of flames that would have leapt up from a well-tended fire. The tongue was also visualized as sharp like an axe, *paraśu* (RV VI.3.4), and pure *śuci* (RV II.9.1). Overall, the image is of a deity who was bright, sharp, and sparkling, but not necessarily endowed with the attributes of physical prowess.

The representation of Indra in anthropomorphic terms was at once more explicit and distinctive. Like Agni, he was envisaged as endowed with a strong jaw (*suśipra*, RV II.12.6). He was occasionally envisioned as a bearded man, with drops of *soma* trapped in his beard (RV II.11.17). In a more complete visualization, he was represented as having a stomach full of *soma*, a strong body, the *vajra* or thunderbolt in his hand, and a powerful head (RV II.16.2). While Indra was occasionally conceived of as golden hued (*hiraṇya varṇa*, RV V.38.2), he was, more often than not, described as *harita* (tawny brown or yellow), the colour of the *soma* juice as well of the horses that drew his chariot (RV III.44.5).

Interestingly, both the deities were visualized as deriving their strength from the substances they consumed—ghee or *ghṛta* in the case of Agni (e.g. RV V.14.5) and *soma* in the case of Indra (e.g. RV III.51.12). In the latter instance the invigorating drink provided by the supplicants was thought to strengthen the stomach, head and arms of the deity.

There were other similarities envisaged between the deities: both were conceptualized as supermen or *nṛtama*, literally the most masculine of men (e.g. RV III.1.12, III.32.17) and as being endowed with maleness, *paumsya* (RV II.13.10) or being men, *pumān* (RV IV.3.10). Thus, if we consider masculinity as a minimal prerequisite for a martial identity, a necessary but

not sufficient condition, then both the deities were eminently qualified to be projected as possible role models.

The representation of the deities as embodiments of masculinity was reinforced by comparing them with animals, most frequently the bull, *vr̥ṣa*/*vr̥ṣabha*, a typical symbol of virility and male generative power in a pastoral context. While the epithet of *vr̥ṣa* was occasionally extended to Agni (RV II.1.20), it was most characteristically associated with Indra (RV II.14.1). In one instance, almost everything associated with the deity, the equipment for pressing *soma*, his *vajra*, chariot, horses and weapons, were described as bull-like (RV II.16). Clearly, the poet felt that reiterating the imagery was a useful strategy.

Occasionally, the gods were compared with other animals. Agni, for instance, was equated with the *simha* (RV III.2.11) or lion, a comparison possibly suggested by the colour of the fire and the roar of the burning flames. In another instance he was compared to a horse, carrying oblations swiftly to the gods (RV III.37.14). Indra, likewise, was compared to an elephant and a lion (RV IV.16.14), both animals symbolic of strength, power and majesty.

As is evident Agni and Indra were almost invariably equated with powerful animals. Yet, this predominantly masculine imagery was occasionally subverted: Indra's stomach filled with *soma* was, in one instance, compared with a cow's udder filled with milk (RV II.14.10). And, as we will see, the social roles and powers attributed to the deities did not invariably rest on physical strength or displays of martial prowess.

IV

From the Physical to the Social

Within the early Vedic tradition, both the principal deities were envisaged as, expectedly, immortal, but also as youthful, and beyond disease or decay (e.g. RV II.10.2, II.6.6, II.20.3, III.2.2, III.32.7). These attributes formed, as it were, the prerequisites for the other qualities that were assigned to them. While there were some similarities in the ways in which Agni and Indra were visualized, there were also significant variations.

Given Agni's association with the ritual, domestic fire, it is not surprising that he was frequently represented as the lord of the household or *gr̥hapati* (e.g. RV II.1.2). The *gr̥hapati* was not a particularly martial figure: nonetheless, he was regarded as powerful as a man who exercised control over the resources of the household, used these for ritual and other exchanges, organized prestigious ritual activities, and oversaw the activities of all those who lived within his circumscribed realm.

As significant is the way in which Agni was described as *atithi* (e.g. RV II.2.8). This designation of the deity as guest was symbolic of his intimate connection with the household, as well as of his being a means of establishing links with the worlds beyond the domestic. Once again, the guest was a revered figure, even though he was not necessarily martial.

At another level, both Agni as well as the more explicitly martial Indra was visualized as kinsfolk of the invokers. However, while both were invoked as fathers and brothers (e.g. RV II.1.9, IV 17.17, IV 23.6), Agni was also addressed as son (RV II.1.9). Once again, one can see that this imagery derived from the fact that Agni was kindled and therefore produced by the sacrificer, and the relationship could have been envisaged as that between a father and son. There is then, a hint of intimacy, affection and closeness, which seems to be missing in the conceptualization of the more aggressive deity. Both deities were also invoked as friends, *sakhā/mitra* (RV II.1.9, II.20.3).

Other epithets used to describe the deities were drawn from networks beyond those of kinship and friendship. These included terms indicative of positions of power and/ or status. Several of these were used for both Agni and Indra, though some tended to be more specific to one rather than the other deity. Terms used to address both included *gopa* or protector (e.g. RV II.9.2, V 31.1), *viśpati* or lord of the community (e.g. RV II.1.8, III.40.3) and *rājā* (e.g. RV II.1.8, II.14.11), a term perhaps best translated as chief rather than king in this context.

While the use of these terms suggests that these were regarded as attributes common to both deities, some other epithets, with perhaps more explicit connotations of power, were generally associated with Indra. In one instance he was endowed with the rather grandiose title of the sole *rājā* of the universe (*ekasya viśvasya bhuvanasya rājā*, RV III.46.2). However, before we conclude that this was an indubitable proof of power, it may be worth considering some of Agni's virtually exclusive epithets: these included the term *vaiśvānara*, literally belonging to all men (e.g. RV III.2.1) as well as *nārāśamsa*, i.e. praised by men (e.g. RV II.3.2). Clearly, there was more than one way of describing a powerful deity in the early Vedic context, and if the imagery was drawn from experience, men who were not necessarily martial may have commanded considerable respect.

At the same time, we need to recognize the distinctive ways in which Indra's powers were represented. One of the strategies frequently adopted by the poets was to describe him as possessed of a hundred powers, *śatakratu*, (e.g. RV II.16.8). He was also visualized as winning a wide range of resources,

including wealth, light, men, fertile land, horses, cattle and water (RV II.21.1).

More specifically, Indra was frequently invoked as *Vṛtrahan*, the slayer of *Vṛtra* (e.g. RV II.20.7). The significance of this inveterate enemy of Indra has been variously interpreted. According to some scholars, *Vṛtra* symbolized the forces of drought, which would have posed a serious threat to communities living in a semi-arid region. Consequently, the end of a period of crisis would have been celebrated. This could be represented as a victory of the gods, and according to those who advocate this possibility, the heroic god Indra, associated in later tradition with rains, was legitimately connected with bringing about the end of a natural disaster.

Other scholars argue that the Indra-*Vṛtra* conflict was meant to represent a cosmogonic myth, in which creative processes were visualized in terms of heroic activities. Once again, this interpretation is plausible. Yet others have regarded *Vṛtra* as symbolic of the indigenous populations who were ideally overrun by heroes who modeled themselves along the lines of the warrior god. In turn, the ways in which the deity was imagined probably mirrored the exploits of human heroes. It is likely that the myth, like all such narratives, was multivalent. We may also note that in the later Vedic textual tradition, Indra's killing of *Vṛtra* was no longer regarded as an unalloyed victory of good over evil—instead, it was considered symbolic of the killing of a *brāhmaṇa*, defined within the tradition as a heinous sin, the guilt of which had to be either expiated or transferred. Somewhat less ambivalent was Indra's destruction of the *pura* or *pur*, a fortified settlement, for which he was exalted by being invoked as *purandara* (e.g. RV V.30.11).

Indra's exploits were visualized as being rendered possible because of his typical equipment, the *vajra* or the thunderbolt, with the god being typically characterized as *vajra bāhu* or *vajra hasta* (literally, one armed with the thunderbolt, RV II.12.13).

The other symbol of Indra's power was his chariot, which was visualized as being drawn by two reddish brown horses (e.g. RV III.30.6). Occasionally, the number of horses was multiplied—progressing, in one instance, from two to four, six, eight, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, sixty, eighty, ninety, culminating in a hundred (RV II.18.4-6). Elsewhere, his *ratha* was envisaged as being unhindered by either mountain or sea (RV II.16.3). Although described less frequently and vividly, Agni was also visualized as being endowed with a chariot. His chariot, characteristically, was bright (RV III.11.5).

While the thunderbolt and the horse-drawn chariot were invoked as symbols of Indra's prowess, other sources of strength were also acknowledged.

These included the deities who were conceptualized as his followers or supporters, typically the band of gods known as the Maruts, often referred to as storm gods. Their association with Indra was thought to be so close that he was often invoked as Marutvan, i.e. along with or possessed of the Maruts (e.g. RV III.47.1).

If the *vajra*, *ratha* and the band of supporters were conceptualized as being virtually unique to Indra, there were some attributes that were thought to be common to both him and Agni. For instance, both deities were conceptualized as wealthy (RV II.1.3. III.30.19). However, in the case of Indra, this access to wealth was often explicitly related to his heroic exploits (RV III.42.6).

What is interesting is that neither of the deities was envisaged as hoarding or accumulating wealth; what was emphasized, instead, was their generosity in giving or sharing what they possessed. However, this liberality had to be ensured through suitable invocations. Agni, for instance, was invoked as *draviṇada*, the giver of wealth (RV II.9.1). In the case of Indra, we find him being repeatedly addressed as *maghavan*. This was an epithet that worked in two directions—on the one hand, it indicated that the person referred to possessed *magha* or wealth; on the other, it suggested that he was disposed to be generous towards those who sought his favours (RV V.36.4). In other words, the heroic ideal encompassed not merely displays of valour, but also required demonstrations of benevolence and generosity.

It is also worth examining the epithets that were virtually exclusively used for Agni. While we have noted some of these earlier, there were others that were drawn exclusively from the ritual domain. These include *hotṛ* or invoker (e.g. RV II.2.5), used to indicate Agni's role in summoning the deities, the self-explanatory *dūta* or messenger (e.g. RV II.6.6), as also descriptions of the deity as the bearer of oblations (e.g. RV III.2.2). He was also addressed as the *purohita* or chief priest of both gods and men (RV III.2.8). In one of the most elaborate of such formulations, he was identified with virtually every significant priestly category: the *hotṛ*, *potṛ*, *ṛtvij*, *neṣṭṛ*, *praśastr*, *adhvaryu*, *brāhmaṇa* and *gr̥hapati* (RV II.1.2). Other deities were almost never described in these terms.

In contrast to the elaborate and frequent identification of Agni with the priesthood, the ritual roles assigned to Indra were relatively limited. While he was occasionally invoked as the drinker of *soma*, *somapā* (e.g. RV II.12.13), or *somapati*, the lord of *soma*, not surprising in view of his close association with this potent fluid, none of these epithets suggest that the deity was conceived

of as being able to undertake priestly roles.

Also virtually unique to Agni was another set of epithets, with connotations of knowledge. One of these was *viśvavedas*, literally the all-knowing (e.g. RV III.20.24), another was *jātvavedas* (e.g. RV II.2.1), one who knows about all living beings. He was also frequently invoked as the all-knowing *kavi* (e.g. RV II.1.13). Although these terms were occasionally used for Indra, they did not form part of the dominant ways in which the deity was visualized.

We can then tentatively conclude that the ideal of the martial hero, as represented by the visualization of Indra in the *Rgveda*, was circumscribed and juxtaposed by the ways in which Agni was conceptualized, just as the representation of the priest-god was by that of Indra. While Indra's birth was visualized as a valorous exploit, Agni's was portrayed through a range of complex, virtually feminine, non-martial imagery. In terms of anthropomorphic ideas, both deities were envisaged as luminous—however, there were differences as well. These elements of overlap and divergence appear, if anything, more obvious when we consider the socio-political attributes assigned to each deity. Once again, while both were visualized as chiefs, Indra was conceptualized in a far more heroic mode. Yet, Agni was also visualized as powerful, as the head of the household, as the typical guest, as the typical priest, and as knowledgeable.

What is also noteworthy is the absence of any references to conflicts between these two ideals. That, as we know, was a strand of thought that was developed at length in the later Vedic tradition, in a somewhat different situation of incipient state formation, where the issue of socio-political hierarchies amongst men (and gods) was explored through legends and myths. Not surprisingly, the brahmanical texts insisted on the superiority of the priesthood. Yet, the often shrill tone, and the reiteration of this concern suggests that there was resistance to these claims, resistance that was often represented as emanating from the *kṣatriya*. In the light of these later developments we can perhaps suggest that while the martial ideal may have existed in pre-state or non state situations, it probably acquired a different meaning and significance in contexts of state formation and social stratification.

METALLURGICAL MARVELS OF ANCIENT INDIA

(From the Harappan Civilization to the Gupta Age)

Arun Kumar Jha* & Shabnam Kumari**

The saga of metallurgy led to the advancement and enrichment of north-western culture in ancient India. The use of metals and their production have been one of its most ancient of sciences. These revolutionised the material life of the people. The various ruins and classical scriptures of this age shed abundant light in this regard.

Gold was the most sought after metals in early India. Panning or washing of gold-dust was probably the principal means to obtain gold. The supply of gold was also made available from the Kolar mines of Karnataka. This also shows the communicating links between south and north. Gold was used as ornaments or amulets to ward off evils since Harappan times. Even metallic money, golden *niṣkas*, has been mentioned in the *Rg Veda*. Some historians consider the *niṣkas* to denote gold coins worn as necklaces. A *niṣka* possessed a definite weight equal to 320 *ratīs*. Gold also served as a means to facilitate trade and commerce. The Kushanas, the Satvahanas and the Guptas had issued numerous gold coins. So gold mining was a flourishing industry of the period under consideration.¹

Silver makes its earliest appearance with the dawn of the Harappan civilization. According to Sir John Marshall, The Indus people probably had learnt the art of separating silver either from gold ores or from Argentiferous galena combined with the lead. This technology continued on in later times.² But silver was brought in large quantities from Faranjal mines in Afghanistan, Gumuksha, mines in Armenia or even from lead mines in Persia. It was more commonly prevalent metal than that of the gold.

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1. Satya Prakash, *Prāchin Bhārat Me Rasāyan Ka Vikas* (in Hindi) (Varanasi, 1960), p. 746.
2. Sir John Marshall et. al., *Mohenjo Daro and the Indus Civilization* (London, 1931), Vol. II, pp. 747.

During the later Vedic era, the Satamana made of silver, had the same weight like the *niska* equal to 320 *ratīs*.

Several silver coins of the Mauryas and the Sungas have been found in the excavation at Banagarh.³ Here it is noteworthy that Silver coins were also in use during the rein of the Satvahanas and at several other sites in the north-west.

The mineral-rich Aravalli region of Rajasthan was one of the important early lead-mining regions in antiquity. Lead often imported in ingot form, was used for making vases or plumb bobs, and was used as coins also. Besides, arsenic, antimony and nickel were also known to the Kushans. Arsenic was used as a deoxidiser mostly for closed casting and to increase the hardness of artifacts by alloying it with copper.⁴

In early India, copper was known as *Tāmra* in Sanskrit texts and *Tāmra-pana* meant a copper coin. The earliest recorded use of copper-ware in north-western India has been around 3000 BC. The findings at Mohenjodaro and Harappa bear this out. Besides, early copper artifacts of about the sixth millennium BC are also reported from the pre-Indus valley sites of Baluchistan in the north-western part of the Indian sub-continent close to the Iranian border. There is also some evidence for smelting furnace from the Harappan civilization of the north-western part of the subcontinent. There is fairly extensive evidence for the ancient mining of copper ores from the Khetri region of Rajasthan. A furnace, in which copper was heated and melted, was also found there.⁵ Excellent copper weapons have come from the Gangetic Valley (Copper-Hoard culture dated 1200 BC). In third century BC Greek and Bactrian rulers issued copper coins in this country. Copper coins belonging to the Mauryas and the Sungas have been found in Banagarh. The Kushanas and the Satavahanas minted large number of copper coins, which circulated for centuries. Bangles made of copper have also been found. A bolt of the Aśokan Pillar, made of copper at Ramapurvā, has been discovered by Garrick in 1881.⁶ The bolt of 24½" is in the shape of a long rod. Its circumference in the middle is 14" and 12" at both the ends. It is pure copper, which has been

3. Satya Prakash, *op. cit.*, pp. 746, 758, 782.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 747.

5. K.T.M. Hegde, *An Introduction to Ancient Indian Metallurgy*, Geological Society of India (Bangalore, 1991), pp. 57-82; Also see, P. Neogi, *Copper in Ancient India*, Reprint by Janaki Prakashan (Patna, 1989), pp. 10-42.

6. Satya Prakash, *op. cit.*, p. 780.

utilized to join the main portion of the Pillar with the apex part of the Aśokan Pillar. Copper has been mentioned in the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* as an article of export from India. In those days copper-ore was extracted in a big way and it was smelted locally in Rajasthan and South India also referred to in the *Periplus*. Philostratus of Lemnos in c. 230 AD has referred to a shrine in Taxilā in India. In this temple, pictures were hung on copper tablets representing the feats of Alexander and Porus. Here it is interesting to note the observations of Philostratus,... "the various figures were portrayed in a mosaic of orichalcum, silver, gold and oxidized copper, but the weapons were in iron. The metals were so ingeniously worked into one another that the pictures, which they formed, were comparable to the productions of the most famous Greek artists."⁷ Even today it is kept in Kolkata Museum.

Here it would be in the fitness of things to note that in 1864 Harris discovered a huge Buddha in pure copper at Sultanganj belonging to the period of the Guptas. It is 7'6" in height and it weighs about one ton. Several coins of Chandragupta II have been found nearby this statue. This colossal copper-made Buddha is indeed a metallurgical masterpiece and a marvel. It is still preserved in Birmingham museum.⁸

Furthermore, the utensils made of copper were used in ceremonial functions because copper was regarded as the sacred metal. Even in the Buddhist stupas of the north-western India, holy ashes were kept in the pots of copper.

In ancient times tin was known as Kassiteros in the Greek language. This word was derived from the early Sanskrit word *Kasthira* for tin. In ancient India the value of tin for hardening copper was recognized and the art of tempering tin with other metals was developed. The fact is corroborated by the comments of the Greek historian Philostratus (quoted above in the section on Copper) regarding the excellent tempering of various metals that had been practiced in the north-western India.

The earliest firm evidence for the production of metallic zinc is from India. Of the metals used in antiquity zinc is one of the most difficult to smelt since zinc volatilises at about the same temperature of around 1000°C that is needed to smelt zinc-ore. As a result it would form as vapour in the furnace which would immediately get reoxidised and hence lost. So metallic

7. W.H. Schoff (Translation), *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* (London, 1912), p. 71.

8. Satya Prakash, *op. cit.*, pp. 781-782.

zinc is seldom reported in antiquity.⁹ However, in India there is unique evidence for the extensive and semi-industrial production of metallic zinc at the Zawar area of Rajasthan. An ingenious method was devised of downward distillation of the zinc vapour formed after smelting zinc ore using specifically designed retorts with condenser and furnaces so that the smelted zinc vapour could be drastically cooled down to get a melt that could solidify to zinc metal. The *Rasaratnākara*, a text ascribed to the great Indian scientist Nagarjuna of the early Christian era, describes the method of production of zinc in c. 50 BC.¹⁰ The recent pioneering work on the zinc-lead-silver mining archaeology in Rajasthan by Willies *et al* and the relevant C-14 dates have firmly established India's primacy in non-ferrous ore mining. In fact, India achieved the distinction of being the only country in the ancient world to produce pure zinc metal and high zinc-brass alloys. It is quite possible that zinc-making technology travelled west from India during 6th-5th centuries BC.¹¹

During the Harappan era, copper used to be alloyed with tin and arsenic, though these were scarce commodities. Bronze, an alloy of copper and tin, also came in use and the Indus towns were also known as Bronze Age cities. Amongst the earliest bronze casting in the world is the well executed statue of a dancing girl from Mohenjodaro.¹² Some of the most beautiful and well executed bronze castings are the icons from the Chola period in the Thanjavur area of South India (c. 10 century A.D.), though its bronze samples were mostly solid cast. Investigations by Srinivasan show that the earliest and continuing use of the artifacts of rapidly quenched high-tin bronzes is from the Indian peninsula. Philostratus states that the art of welding metals together was known to ancient Indians.¹³

The antiquity of brass, an alloy of copper and zinc, was known and could be made during the fifth-fourth century B.C., as in Lothal and Atranjikhhera, only by the cementation route in which one of the following

9. Arun Kumar Biswas and Sulekha Biswas, *Minerals and Metals in Ancient India*, U.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., (New Delhi, 1996), Vol. I, pp. 351-384.
10. K.T.M. Hegde, P.T. Craddock and V.H. Sonavane, *Zinc Distillation in Ancient India*, Proceedings of the 24th International Archaeometry Symposium, Smithsonian Institution Press (Washington, 1986), pp. 249-258.
11. Willies *et al.*, *Ancient Zinc lead-silver Mining in Rajasthan*, Interim Report (New Delhi, 1987), pp. 83-97.
12. A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, Fontana Books in Association with Rupa & Co. (New Delhi, 1971).
13. T.R. Anantharaman, *The Rustless Wonder*, Vigyan Prasar (New Delhi, 1997), p. 79.

was smelted along with copper ore, zinc ore, sphalerite concentrate or the roasted product and zinc oxide. But during the 4th century B.C. the distillation route of making zinc and alloying this with molten copper became the only way of making the brass containing more than 28% zinc. The Harappan site of Rojdi has yielded a few samples of chisel, celt, rod and bangle, made of brass and assaying up to 1.54% zinc. Similar materials might have been used for making the brass-bronze items of Atranjikhara during the painted grey-ware (zinc) era (c. 1200-600 B.C.). One copper based item contained 11.68% Sn (tin), 9.0% Pb (lead) and 6.28% Zn (zinc) while another item assayed 20.72% Sn and 16.20% Zn. Most of the brass samples in ancient India contained variable proportions of Zn, Sn and Pb. A brass vase, excavated from the Bhir Mound site at Taxila (dated to the 4th century B.C.) contains 34.34% Zn, 4.25% Sn, 3.0% Pb, 1.77% Fe (iron) and 0.4% Nickel. Brass articles and urns of c. 1st century B.C. have also been on excavation of some ancient stupas and topes.¹⁴

Moreover, both brass and bronze were used in ancient India for coinage. Circular punch-marked brass coins of Dhanadeva and Aryavarma (c. 1st century B.C.) have been found. A small number of die-struck coins of the Pre-Gupta and Gupta periods, including a piece attributed to Chandragupta II, are considered to be made of brass.¹⁵ Besides, it is possible that brass was used for decorative purposes due to its likeness to gold. Its ornamental use is also evident from the quotation of Philostratus given above in the section on Copper.

Regarding the antiquity of iron, experts claim it to be the part of the post-Vedic culture, roughly dating back to 1000 B.C. This theory is based on the word '*ayas*' which recurs in the four Vedas and is widely believed to denote iron. But the *Atharva Veda* and the *Yajur Veda* speak of different colours of '*ayas*' indicating that it may have been a generic term for metal.¹⁶

Iron became a catalyst when its supply became common and when the smith learnt to use such fuel and techniques as enabled him to temper and harden the artifacts. Gradually iron was used in handicrafts and agriculture on a considerable scale besides its use in war, hunting and

14. Arun Kumar Biswas, *The Primacy of India in Ancient Brass and Zinc Metallurgy*, India Journal of History of Science, 28 (4), 1993, pp. 309-330.

15. Satya Prakash, *op. cit.*

16. D.K. Chakrabarti, *The Early Use of Iron in India*, Oxford University Press (New Delhi, 1992), pp. 17-31.

animal slaughter.¹⁷

Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* speaks of the alloys of iron. The iron-ores of the best qualities were brought from different parts of India. Swords made from these alloys were sold to Greece and some other countries. This is evident when we note that under the rule of the Roman emperors Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, Ferrum Indium appears in the list of dutiable articles. The various metallurgic processes also came to be known, i.e. extraction, purification, formation of oxides, chlorides, calcinations, incineration, powdering, solution, distillation, precipitation, rinsing, drying, steaming, melting, casting, etc. Several iron crucibles and furnaces of the Gupta period and iron tools and implements were far more varied and numerous than those of earlier time.¹⁸

The forging of wrought iron seems to have reached its zenith in India in the first millennium A.D. The earliest large forging is the famous Iron Pillar at Mehrauli in New Delhi dated with an inscription of the Gupta period of the third century A.D., at a height of over 7 meters and a weight of about 6 tons. The pillar is believed to have been made by forging together a series of disc-shaped iron blooms. Apart from the dimensions, another remarkable unparalleled aspect of the Iron Pillar is the absence of corrosion till date, which has been linked, to its composition the high purity of the wrought iron and the phosphorus content and the distribution of slag. Its chemical analyses by Headfield, a noted European scholar, denotes following facts:¹⁹

Iron — 99.720	Sulphur — 0.006
Carbon — 0.080	Phosphorus — 0.114
Silicon — 0.046	Manganese — Nil

A.L. Basham rightly holds that the size and weight of this Iron Pillar could not have been produced by the best European iron founders about one hundred years ago.²⁰

India has been reputed for its iron and high carbon steel since Greek and Roman times. The Greek accounts report the manufacture of steel in ancient India by the crucible process. There also existed an ancient Greek chemical work entitled *On the Tempering of Indian Steel*. Literary accounts

17. P. Neogi, *Iron in Ancient India*, Indian Association for Cultivation of Science (Calcutta, 1914), p. 78.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-137.

19. Satya Prakash, *op. cit.*, p. 785; Also see T.R. Anantharaman, *op. cit.*

20. A.L. Basham, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

suggest that steel from some parts of the Indian peninsula was exported to Europe, China, the Arab world and the Middle East. The *Periplus* refers to the Indian iron and steel as imports into the Abyssinian ports. In the 12th century the Arab Idrisi extols and notes that the "Hindus excel in the manufacture of iron. They have also workshops wherein are forged the most famous sabers in the world. It is impossible to find anything to surpass the edge that you get from Indian Steel." This passage has been quoted in the *Periplus*, which proves beyond doubt that the art of smelting and casting iron was well developed in ancient India.²¹

We thus see that the early scientists of our hoary past became the torch-bearers in the sphere of metallurgy and opened new vistas for the progress of mankind. Their legacy to posterity especially in the case of zinc and steel contributed much to the material prosperity of the masses.

21. W.H. Schoff, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL OUTLOOK OF TAXILA

*S.M. Haldhar**

North-west India is the cradle of Gandhara civilization and Taxila is considered a nucleus of the great periodical through remains spread all over the Pothohar range, northern areas and Swat valley.

Taxila is situated about 32 km north-west of Islamabad. It is bounded by the Muree Hills running from North to South. It was an outstanding city on the South-Eastern fringe of the celebrated Gandhara region and mentioned in almost all the important religious, literary and historical sources. Saraikhola and Hathial remains have indicated that the history of Taxila is about 5000 years old.

Hathiāl, Bhirh Mound, Sirkup and Sirsukh are four fortified sites in Taxila. Numerous Buddhist monuments are found all over the valley.¹ Hathial and Bhirmound are pre-Buddhist sites.

Sirkup replaced Bhir Mound as the main settlement of the city around the 2nd century B.C.E. The city remained under occupation for three hundred years during the successive rules of Greeks, Scythians, Parthians and Kushanas down to the time of Vima Kadaphises when it again shifted to the site of Sirsukh. It continued to be in occupation under the Sakas, Parthians and early Kusanas. In Parthian times during the 1st century B.C.E. there was a south ward extension of the settlement. This change was brought by military rather than by civic requirements. Such settlements could be called "Moving camps of cities", as the site from which a king shifted became deserted. For a conqueror to use this as capital was against the rules of politics, apparently because its ins and outs were known to enemy agents. Hence a new capital was done at a new site. The new fortification of rubble masonry was built in the second half of the 1st century B.C.E. It was 4050 meters in perimeter and was provided at irregular intervals with rectangular bastions. The corner bastions were pentagonal in shape. The southern portion was fenced off to form a citadel. Sirkup was well laid out and "shows several large blocks of

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1. A. Cunningham 1871 : 129, 132, 135 : 1871b: 117, 119, 121; J. Marshall 1960; F.R. Allchin : 1982.

dwellings, separated one from the other by narrow side streets. The unit of their design is the open quadrangle surrounded by chambers and this unit is repeated, two, three or four time according to the amount of accommodation required by the occupants, the small rooms fronting on the streets being usually used as shops. The walls were constructed either of rough rubble or diaper masonry.²

The bases of a few stupas were exposed within the precincts of the fortified settlement.³ It may be associated with Buddhism because Buddhism flourished here during the Scytho-Parthian period. However some scholars have referred these as Jaina origin of these stupa.⁴

There is a stupa in the hilly part of Sirkup which is identified with the one erected by Asoka to commemorate Kunal's tragedy. This dates only from the 3rd or 4th century CE, through an earlier and much smaller stupa had existed at the site of larger one in whose core it was buried. The Dhammarājika stupa, situated about a mile to the east of Bhirh, is one of the most important Buddhist monument at Takkasila and owing to the importance of its being one of the 84,000 stupas believed to have been erected by Asoka. It underwent several restoration.

Sirsukh has been excavated in a very limited area only. Its fortification made of diaper-faced rubble. It had semicircular bastions and contained loopholes for the use of defenders. Sirkup and Sirsukh occupied 192.7 and 325 acres respectively in the years (50 BCE) and (100 CE).⁵ Location of Takkasila on the great trade route which used to connect India with central and western Asia, coupled with the strength of its natural defenses, the fertility of the soil, and a constant supply of good water, readily accounts for the importance of Takkasila in early times.

Archaeology

The Indo-Greek king Antialcidas ruled in Taxila around 100 BCE, according to the Helidarus pillar inscription. Julian is a World Heritage Site of Taxila. Dhammarajika is a large Buddhist stupa in Taxila. Buddhist devotees in Indo-parthian dress at the Dhammarajika stupa, Taxila stupa base at Sirkup, decorated with Hindu, Buddhist and Greek temples' fronts.

Archaeological artifacts from the Indo-Greeks strata at Taxila are as follows:

2. J. Marshall 1960: 70F.
3. D. Mitra 1971: 124.
4. A. Cunningham 1871 : 129, 132, 135 : 1871b: 117, 119, 121; J. Marshall 1960.
5. J. Marshall 1960.

1. Fluted Cup (Bhir Mound).
2. Cup with rasace and decorative scroll (Bhir Mound).
3. Stone palette with individual on a couch being crowned by standing women and saved.
4. Handle with double depiction of a philosopher.
5. Woman with smile.
6. Man with moustache.

The stupa and monastery at Julian are the best preserved buildings at Taxila and the only ones in Pakistan that give some idea of what the original decoration around the stupa was like. A roof protects the plaster statues around the stupa and the site is guarded day and night.

Buddha and Bodhisattva images sit in niches with attendants beside them. More rows of elephants, lions and naked Greek Atlantes figures imaginatively moulded into contorted position as they strain to hold up the structure above them. There is a Kharosthi inscription on the fifth stupa, giving the titles of the statues and the names of the donors.

The main stupa court is protected by a roof, which is surrounded by 21 votive stupas. The healing Buddha with a hole in his nose is set in the north of main stupa. The Kharosthi inscription below the statue records that the statue was gift from Budhamitra. The votive stupa in the court of the south of main stupa contained a relic chamber which is now in the museum. It is a tall, narrow miniature stupa over one meter high, made of hard lime plaster, it was painted a gaudy blue and red and crudely decorated with granite, lapis, rubis, amethyst, carnelian and amarine. The relics were hidden inside copper box.

The 2nd century Julian monastery is west of main stupa. A group of five plaster sculptures at the entrance is protected behind wooden doors. These are copies, originals are in the Taxila monastery museum. The group shows the meditating Buddha with a standing Buddha on either side a figure behind the attending figures on the left carries a fly whisk, on the right stands Vajrapani holding a thunderbolt.

The monastery court is surrounded by 28 monk cells reached by the stone staircase in the cell in the north western corner. The balcony post holes and the charred woods found in the excavations indicated wooden balcony supported by wooden pillar.

A low wooden door led into each cell. The doorways made of mud and small stones, have fallen down. High up in each cell is a small sloping window. In the 5th century all the walls were plastered and painted and statues of Buddha and scenes from his life decorated the court yard.

The shallow water tank in the centre of the court collected the rain water off the wooden roof. In the dry season water was taken out from wells at the bottom of the hills. The monks bathed in the enclosure in the corner of the tank. The hall of assembly, kitchen, storeroom, refectory, stewards room and latrine are also found. The monastery burned by White Huns in 455 CE and never rebuilt.

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CONTEXTUALISING THE DIFFERENCE : REPRESENTATIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN FROM THE PANJĀB REGION IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

Samira Verma*

"The fundamental cultural contradiction of the process of domination..." is that "domination as a form of incorporation, of bonding together, and simultaneously domination as a form of creating distance, difference and otherness" co-exist together.

—Gerald Sider

The epic *Mahābhārata*, of colossal proportions, is representative of the high standard of literary accomplishment achieved by writers in early India. The work of more than one hand, by now an accepted fact; it is not merely a text but a compendium containing diverse strands, real or fictive as the case may be, relating to the early Indian context. It is home to multitudinous sections and categories of people and consequently to a range of traditions, systems of belief, values, ways of life, and codes of order, manners, customs and even geographical spaces. It is to this last that we will devote attention here. It is probably not even possible at this point to list all the regions of the subcontinent that are covered by the text, both by way of small, incidental references and lengthy expositions. But of all the places mentioned, the region of the Panjāb is one among those that does not receive much deliberation, as a region so to speak. However, as it turns out, it was this very region that produced characters reasonably central to the entire plot. Specifically, it is the area of Gāndhāra and Madra that we are pointing towards. The purposes of this essay thus, are to first trace, and then compare and contrast gender relations and values within the specific social milieu of particular areas within a wider region.

The general chronological span assigned to the *Mahābhārata* is between 400 BCE to 400 CE, when the text was compiled in the form that we now have. This fact should be borne in mind before we proceed any further. Secondly, the *Mahābhārata* as a text predominantly displays a kṣatriya and

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bardic ethos and world-view, although its later Brahmanisation (or Bhrguisation) is nonetheless very apparent. The perceived society then, was composed of numerous different 'tribes' as they are called today (see for instance, Law 1973), occupying different regions and areas of the subcontinent. Panjāb included the 'tribes' or groups of the Gāndhāras, Madrakas, Kāmbojas and probably even the Vṛṣṇis. However, the location of all these principalities within the Panjāb is a matter somewhat undecided. B.C. Law (1973:9) has suggested that Gāndhāra corresponded to the modern districts of Peshawar in the North-West Frontier Province and Rawalpindi in the Punjab, but there is no consensus on these boundary limits; different scholars adding or subtracting areas to designate what they think must have made up Gāndhāra (see *Ibid.*). Similar is the case with Kāmboja (see *Ibid.*:2-3). However, while some scholars agree about it being located in the "extreme" North West of India (*Ibid.*), Van Buitenen categorically says that Kāmboja was "in the Panjāb" (Buitenen 1978: 140. Emphasis added). Of all these, Madra is the easiest to identify as it is generally understood to have been situated in central Panjāb (modern Sialkot district), between the rivers 'Chenab and Ravi (Law 1973:55). As for the Vṛṣṇis, A.M. Shastri (2004: 137) suggests that the city of Sunet in present day Ludhiana in Punjab was a stronghold of the Vṛṣṇis. But this according to him was a much later development, way after the war that is. Finally, even while it is a fact that the actual conflict as depicted in the epic took place quite a distance away from the Panjāb, we cannot dismiss the fact that the groups and people from the region were present, sometimes even crucially, both during the war and in the circumstances leading upto it.

We will start first with Gāndhāra. But before we do it is imperative to keep in mind that we will be working with that geographical extent of Gāndhāra that has been proposed by Law above. What the *Mahābhārata* has to say (or does not say) about the issue will be highlighted as we proceed. However, in this paper we will be concerned with people more than places. The important personages in the *Mahābhārata* from the Gāndhāra region were Śakuni, Gāndhārī, and Subala, in that order. But beginning with the least important and in the order of seniority, Subala was the king of Gāndhāra and the father of Gāndhārī and Śakuni. He is mentioned not even half as much as his children and when is, it is only his name that is referred to in relation to his children (for instance, Śakuni and Gāndhārī are sometimes referred to as Subala's son and daughter respectively), and hence falls in the category of peripheral characters in the text. The only place where a little more is said about him than his name is when he is solicited by Bhīṣma to give his daughter Gāndhārī

in marriage to Dhṛtarāṣṭra. Subala is supposed to have hesitated initially for this alliance owing to Dhṛtarāṣṭra's blindness but eventually consented after reflection upon the bridegroom's "lineage, fame and morals". Thus for Subala, the lineage etc. of the groom was a far more important consideration for marrying his daughter than the fact that the person to whom he was marrying her was congenitally blind, or even the fact that his daughter took the extreme decision of keeping herself blindfolded all her life only in the name of fidelity and utter devotion to her husband. It should also equally be noted that no one actually even attempted to stop or dissuade her from taking such a drastic step. It is also said in passing that both Gāndhārī's father and mother were of the same mind regarding this marriage, that both of them wanted to marry her off to Dhṛtarāṣṭra; but nothing more is mentioned of the mother, not even her name (Mbh. I.103.10-13).

Now that a mention has been made of Gāndhārī, it will be easier to discuss her at this point. We are not told about the circumstances of her birth; but only that Bhīṣma had heard about this daughter of Subala, along with one of the king of the Madras and a princess of the Yādavas, all of whom were suitable for being married into the Kuru family as they were "of dynastic lineages, beautiful, and well-protected by their kin" and also because their fathers were "fit to be allied" with them. For Gāndhārī, Bhīṣma had also been told by the brāhmaṇas that she had propitiated Lord Hara who had granted her a boon of a hundred sons. It was immediately after receiving this piece of information that Bhīṣma sent a proposal to her father (I.103.5-10).

The boon that Hara (and also Vyāsa) had bestowed on Gāndhārī did indeed in time come true, although with great difficulty. The poor woman had quite a painful and lengthy period (two years to be precise) of pregnancy, and finally aborted her own foetus—not because of anything else but only when she heard that Kuntī had given birth to a son before her. It was only Vyāsa's timely intervention that prevented Gāndhārī from recklessly throwing away the mass of flesh she had aborted and under his instructions it developed into a hundred sons (I.107.10-24). Thus, the manner of the Kauravas birth (I.107.1-34) was diametrically opposed to that of the Paṇḍavas (who were fathered by different gods), which in fact tallies well with their lifestyle—disjointed, disunited, disorganized, though supporting one belief and movement, but nevertheless a formless and incomplete mass. In addition, Dhṛtarāṣṭra had also fathered Yuyutsu on a *vaiśya* woman who was in his service while Gāndhārī had been pregnant (I.107.35). Thus, it seems that in addition to wives producing sons for their husbands (in Dhṛtarāṣṭra's case a hundred

sons were already on the way and his wife is not even supposed to have objected to his dalliance) the option of begetting sons on other women in service or women apart from the wife was always open. However, in contrast to Kuntī (who herself had the power to call upon the gods and who categorically told Pāṇḍu to stop demanding sons after three) Gāndhārī is shown as quietly and passively becoming a mother; and the important point in this is that none of her sons survived the war to lay claim to the succession. She, or rather her motherhood, can therefore be seen as somewhat being morally inferiorized as it were because she had the misfortune of giving birth to sons who brought disaster upon the family by subverting *dharma*, and who were consequently fatally punished for it.

Nonetheless, Gāndhārī was not just any queen in the harem but was Dhṛtarāṣṭra's chief (and only) queen and played quite an important part in the affairs of the household. She is often referred to as "sagacious and far-sighted" (the text makes her out to be an incarnation of the Goddess 'Wisdom') by her husband and he always sent for her when his son Duryodhana became too unmanageable regarding his decision to go to war against his cousins. It was believed that she might make him see sense or show him the "right path" by using the "right words". In this particular instance in the *Udyoga Parvan* when Gāndhārī was summoned by her husband to dissuade her son who was hell bent on following a catastrophic course of action, she first began by deriding her own husband and held him responsible for not taming his son out of undue love for him. She among other things told him that he was reaping the fruits of entrusting the kingdom to an "evil-minded greedy nitwit with wicked friends" and accused him of overlooking a breach in the family even though he was a sensible enough man (V.127.1-15). She obviously gave quite lengthy sermons to her errant son as well but clearly to no avail (see for instance V. 127.20-50). Following from this it can be seen that her opinion was always valued and counted as crucial among the opinions of other men in the family like Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Vidura and Bhīṣma; as Duryodhana was always exhorted to listen to 'the elders', which also included his mother (V. 145.39-40). Gāndhārī's "consent" was also taken when Dhṛtarāṣṭra married their daughter Duḥśālā to the Sindhu king Jayadratha (I.108.18).

Part of this important status of hers was foregrounded by the fact that she was somehow placed in a unique position (for a woman that is) of being a "listener" in the *Mahābhārata*, i.e. as someone who listened to almost all the major tales, discussions, recounting of war episodes and teachings in the epic, as well as personally witnessing the pivotal dicing match and the

molestation of Draupadī (Brodbeck and Black 2007:60-64). Brian Black (*Ibid*:62) has suggested that this presence of a queen like Gāndhārī " (and even Draupadī) was part of the "representational dimension of the king" and signified the royal power of her husband. However, she was not merely ornamental in that sense and frequently spoke in a manner that was independent of and contrary to her husband. She had some distinct responsibilities as queen and as a listener symbolized not simply her husband's power but also that of her own (*Ibid*.). One among many instances is when Gāndhārī along with Vidura told Dhṛtarāṣṭra that horrible sounds of jackals, donkeys and other ghastly birds were being heard after Draupadī had been abused, and the king on their subtle instigation reprimanded Duryodhana and granted boons to Draupadī by which the Pāṇḍavas were finally saved from being the slaves of the Kauravas (II.63.22-24). It was also Gāndhārī who spoke strongly to her husband to prevent him from agreeing to the second dicing contest which Duryodhana was asking him for (II.66.27-35).

Another remarkably substantial role played by Gāndhārī figures in the *Strī Parvan*, which is a whole book largely devoted to the heartrending depiction of *strī vilāpa* or the lamentations of thousands of women who had lost one or all of their male relations in the war. Most of the depictions found therein and the portrayals that make up these descriptions were narrated by Gāndhārī to Kṛṣṇa. Thus, Gāndhārī has been provided with a unique agency because it is she who was the narrator and spokesperson of the sorrow and immense distress of the Kuru (and other) women. She herself did not express her grief openly (by means of physical gestures) or even silently but mainly spoke about the grief of other women to Kṛṣṇa, which is what makes it so exceptional. She is able to see, hear and know all the women's stories through her divine eyesight and consequently becomes the voice of the otherwise perpetually silent, unnamed, multitudinous Kuru women. Gāndhārī herself at last died in a forest fire along with Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Kuntī. But she remained probably the highest model of womanly virtue in the epic due to her voluntary resolution to be her husband's sharer in his misfortune (who in fact mostly treated her unfairly, but that is actually one of the characteristics of the paradigmatic model of the *pativrata*), to the extent that she gained divine eyesight by virtue of the power she had achieved by this extremely tough sacrifice; which was also the reason for the high degree of respect she commanded within the house and the fear her wrath aroused. For instance, when Duryodhana had been killed unfairly by Bhīma, Yudhiṣṭhira was petrified that Gāndhārī would reduce them to ashes by the "fire of her mind" (IX.62.12) and so he sent Kṛṣṇa to pacify her

before he met her herself. But when at last she did meet with him, she, just by looking at the tip of his toe from within the cloth that covered her eyes gave him a sore nail on that toe (XI.15.6). But all this is just a prelude to her one most significant curse which is hurled at Kṛṣṇa, who is God himself; significant because firstly, it is a woman who is pronouncing the curse (which is unheard of in the text, although there are innumerable curses being aimed at all sorts of people all throughout), and secondly because of its magnitude and the person or cosmic entity towards whom it is directed. After narrating to Kṛṣṇa the contents of the *Strī Parvan*, Gāndhārī, senseless with grief, once again turned to him and attributed to him the moral fault of not stopping the carnage that had taken place although he had been perfectly equipped in every way to do so. Since she believed that he had willfully and deliberately been just a mute spectator to the slaughter when he could have actually averted the disaster she told him that he would also have to reap the fruits of his actions. Consequently, she cursed him by the power that she had acquired by being dutiful towards her husband, to the effect that he would be the cause of the death of his kinsmen and friends and would then himself die a disgraceful death in the forest. Thus, Gāndhārī applied the theory of *karma* and retribution even to God and doomed him and his kinsmen to the exact same fate that had befallen her family (XI.25.36-42). And all this had been possible only due to the fact that she had remained a *pativrata* her entire life and the power that she had gained by virtue of that gave her the authority to spare not even God.

Gāndhārī's brother Śakuni or the 'man from the mountains' as he is frequently referred to in the text (for instance at II.56.10) was a rather more complicated character. He had come to Hāstinapura at the time of his sister's wedding, to leave her there along with large amount of riches, after which he was "properly honored" by Bhīṣma (I.103.14-15). Although at this point in the text it is said that he returned to his city after duly giving Gāndhārī away, he was later to be found at the Kuru court perpetually. Śakuni is thus a very prominent exemplar of the figure of the maternal uncle in early Indian literature and represents a significant strand of matrilineal affinal kinship relations within a largely patriarchal setting. His avowed aim in life was to rally round and facilitate his nephew in his truculent desire for the throne, by taking recourse to any kind of means, fair or foul. But he was not totally evil as is popular perception (particularly dramatic in the televised version of the epic), and did on occasion show a rational streak. For instance, when Duryodhana was burning with envy on seeing the opulence and enormous wealth amassed by Yudhiṣṭhira at the latter's *rājasūya* and the magnificent assembly hall built for

him by the *asura* Maya, Śakuni advised him not to be resentful against the Pāṇḍavas as they had always enjoyed good luck, and not lament about their allies and their fortune, and also that they were such great warriors that they were unable to be defeated in battle even by the Gods. But it was all these facts which Duryodhana was not being able to see, that led Śakuni to propose the cataclysmic dicing match as a definite way of wresting Yudhiṣṭhira's entire fortune (II.44.1-20). A second more wholesome case in point about his goodness was when he told Duryodhana in no uncertain terms that he should give back the Pāṇḍavas their ancestral kingdom and show his gratitude and brotherly spirit towards them as the latter had very large-heartedly freed him from the Gandharvas who had taken him captive (III.239.6-8). Still, Śakuni, due to his initial plan for dicing and his continued counsels to his belligerent nephew, would always be remembered even by the characters within the text as an inveterate gambler, an evil, irredeemable being bent upon bringing ruin upon the family. So devoted was he to the cause of his nephew or so is he depicted as being wholly absorbed in this role of his that there is not even a mention of him getting married or of a wife and family, and as he was always at the Kuru court he appears to be a lifelong bachelor. However there is one mention of his son after the war in the *Aśvamedha Parvan* (which will be discussed later) but that too was only after he had died and his foremost function had ended.

As has been pointed out by Karve (1953:39), the term used for the maternal uncle in the *Mahābhārata* is *mātula*, which is also the term of address used by Duryodhana. Its other derivatives like *māmaka* and *māma* however do not occur. Thus suggests Karve, the term *mātula* was used in a classificatory manner. This *mātula* or Śakuni exercised such an enormous influence on his sister's children that even the parents were unsuccessful in working against it. This brings to mind the Dravidian (and non-brāhmaṇa) kinship system in which the mother's brother occupied a highly distinctive and unparalleled position, where his absence from the family, and specifically on all the major and minor occasions, was absolutely unthinkable. He was also supposed to have immense affection for his sister's children and had a whole lot of responsibilities; both ritual as well as others (see Kapadia 1996:20-21). All these characteristics, i.e. the unmatched status, the affection and the responsibilities—although of a different kind but geared towards the welfare of the sister's children—agree remarkably with Śakuni. And if we bring to mind the region to which he belonged and the fact that there was some amount of a Dravidian-speaking population in the Panjāb from the time the *Rg Veda*

was composed (Trautmann 1981: 14) we could probably establish a link, even if conjectural. But what is interesting is that Śakuni's permanent residence at his sister's house was never (openly) challenged or censured by the generally patriarchal occupants of the same house; and also that the presence of her brother in her marital home meant that Gāndhārī's natal kin ties were never actually completely severed.

There are only two persons associated with the region of Madra in the *Mahābhārata*, one is Śalya, the king of Madra and the other is his sister Mādri. We will first discuss the latter as her story is shorter. As pointed out before, Mādri had been noticed by Bhīṣma as one of the princesses fit for being married into the Kuru household. However, unlike her senior co-wife Kuntī she was not won at a *svayamvara* but was "bought" by Bhīṣma from her father by paying a high price (I.105.1-6). This is a very significant deviation (and the only one of its kind) from the norms of marriage generally followed in the epic, where the bride's self-choice (Kuntī, Draupadī) and abduction (Ambā, Ambikā, Ambālikā, Subhadrā) were the two kinds that were largely followed. Not only does this show that such a system might have been in prevalence but also that it was acceptable and recognized enough to the degree of incorporating a bride acquired through such means into the ruling dynasty. Yet, this according to Van Buitenen (1978:6) accounts for the fact that Mādri was Pāṇḍu's "second and Junior wife" who was not won at a *svayamvara*—which is depicted almost as a "status symbol for highborn women" in the epic—and that consequently her two sons did not have the same status as the three elder ones. But we will still desist from making statements to the effect that such a practice was the one that was customary in Madra unless we find other clinching evidence. What we find is quite to the contrary however. This is not something that is taken note of too often but all the Pāṇḍavas had actually married other women too apart from Draupadī (see I.90.83-89). From among them, Sahadeva had married Vijayā of the Madras but he had obtained her at her *svayamvara*. Thus, it is best to interpret all this in terms of divergent and co-existing rather than monolithic patterns; to the extent of co-existing even within the same region, with such differences probably being the result of different family traditions.

Mādri otherwise had a comparatively short and uneventful life. In the particular social milieu enshrined in the *Mahābhārata* (as in almost all texts) where a woman's barrenness was a veritable curse and the threat from co-wives a sorry reality, women themselves were depicted as longing to become mothers of sons, after which they could rest in peace. It was thus an obligation

which they had to fulfill, and for which they were willing to go to any extent. After Kuntī had given birth to three sons, Mādrī entreated Pāṇḍu by saying:

I am not disturbed even though you have not been fair to me, nor because I must always take second place to Kuntī, flawless lord. Nor has it grieved me, my king, scion of the Kurus, to learn that Gāndhārī has borne a hundred sons. But this is my great grievance that Kuntī and I were both equally deprived of sons, but fate would have it that my husband found progeny from her. If the daughter of Kuntibhoja would bring it about that I too bear children, it would be a favour to me, and to you too it would be a blessing. Being her cowife, I am too proud to speak to Kuntī's daughter; but if you are gracious to me, please urge her yourself. (I.115.1-6)

Mādrī hence was not bothered too much about the secondary treatment that had been meted out to her all her life by her husband in relation to the senior wife, but when it came to the matter of having sons, she demanded equality. Wifehood could thus reckon with compromises but not motherhood. And Mādrī presents a distinct advance in this because she herself went up to her husband (so that he could coerce Kuntī, who would help her co-wife in becoming a mother) and not the other way round. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that such statements as the above made ostensibly by women that we take up and exploit to substantiate 'women's experiences' as it were, are not unmediated.

Mādrī ultimately voluntarily chose death for herself because her husband gave in to his desire (for her) and forgot the curse put upon him by the sage whom he had accidentally killed. She could not bear to live with the guilt of being the cause of her husband's death and wanted to gratify him even in the other world. Already immensely aggrieved, she was pushed into a state of unpardonable regret by Kuntī who accused her for her fatal laxity in saving their husband. Driven to such heights of torment, she decided that she did not deserve to live. Importantly, in the reasons cited for her decision, no *dharmic* angle is invoked and no religious merit is thought to be accruing from it (as in the reasons behind Sati, with which this case is more often than not conflated). The plain logic was that since she was the cause of her husband's death, she too ought to die with him, and more so because it was impossible for her to go on living and treating all the sons at par (I.116.10-30).

Mādrī's brother Śalya on the other hand lived to witness, participate in and die in the war. Unlike Subala he was a lot closer to the Kuru family and

was present on quite a number of occasions when the whole family assembled and discussed matters of consequence (for example V.46.1-9). But then Subala had given his daughter in marriage to the family (even Mādri's father is inconsequential), and Śalya his sister; and from what we have seen a little while ago, the maternal uncle occupied a distinctly important place in the *Mahābhārata*. We first meet with Śalya at Draupadī's *svayaṃvara* where he got lodged into a fight with Bhīma and was ultimately lifted up by the latter and flung onto the ground (I.181.22-24). He was however nowhere on the scene at his sister's wedding (in contrast to Śakuni) or even when she died and was cremated and rose to prominence only afterward. Later when Yudhiṣṭhira's *rājasūya* was to take place and his brothers had gone off to conquer the directions, Nakula, who had been assigned to subjugate the West, also went to Śakala, the Madra capital and "aligned Śalya...with diplomacy", and left after receiving an abundant amount of jewels (II.29.13-14). However, this alignment did not much turn out to be in the Pāṇḍavas' favour as Duryodhana was able to make Śalya fight for him in the war by means of a clever machination at the opportune time (see V.8.1-14). Due to this arrangement Śalya was once made Karna's charioteer, but the former had previously promised Yudhiṣṭhira that he would belittle Karna by speaking in an unsavoury manner to make him lose his concentration, thereby rendering him susceptible in front of Arjuna (V.8.25-30). This Śalya duly did but Karna's angry retorts in retaliation about the Madra country are what make up the most interesting aspect for analysis. But before we get into that, it is worth mentioning one reason for Śalya's important status in the eyes of the Kuru family. As Karna was believed to be Arjuna's equal if not superior in battle, in like manner Śalya was believed to be Kṛṣṇa's equal, the main ground for him being made Karna's charioteer by Duryodhana. He is repeatedly likened to Kṛṣṇa and is spoken of as somebody who always contended with the latter in "battle after battle" (V.162.26-27). Śalya was thus the Kauravas' answer to Kṛṣṇa which obviously increased his prestige many times over.

Coming back to the conversation between Śalya and Karna, the latter's extremely lengthy diatribes about Madra and the people who inhabited that land can be divided into two categories—his general remarks (which were mostly about the men of Madra) and those about the women. According to Karna, Madra was a sinful country and the Madrakas were haters of friends, mean, wicked till the moment of their death, untruthful, irreligious, impious, crooked, impure, of bad speech, were like *mlecchas* in their practices, never performed sacrifices and so on; and anyone who made an alliance with them

became degraded (similar sorts of descriptions are also to be found at other places in the *Mahābhārata*, for instance in the *Śānti Parvan* (Parasher 1991: 250). However, it is not possible for us to entirely reproduce the whole of Karna's malicious dialogue with Śalya (see VIII.27.68-91 and VIII.30.8-81) as it would not serve any real purpose, but we must take a look at the formers' perceptions about the women of Madra. Madra women, it seems, were from this particular viewpoint, thought of as the 'dirt of the whole female sex'. They apparently mingled, of their own free will, with known and unknown men and were thereby unrighteous, unchaste and of free speech. These women ate fried and powdered corn, fish and beef, drank spirits, sang incoherent and obscene songs and indulged in lust with one another. After being intoxicated with spirits they took off their robes and laughed and danced outside the houses in cities, and were also not attached to particular individuals in the matter of intercourse, did as they pleased, were unrestricted and unrestrained even on sacred days, especially in sexual activities. Moreover, the Madraka women, according to Karna, lived and answered calls of nature like asses and camels, and were generally very shameless, hairy, gluttonous and impure. There is another quite interesting observation about the Madra women and their attachment to vinegar that is made by Karna; as per which whenever somebody asked a Madraka woman for a little vinegar she scratched her hips and apparently said that, "let no man ask any vinegar of me that is so dear to me. I would give him my son, I would give him my husband, but vinegar I would not give".

It would be a better idea to examine this misogynist, though context-specific, harangue of Karna in a reverse sort of manner. This means that rather than analyzing his statements to gauge the perceptions about the women of Madra, we could use them to cull out perceptions about women in general. The reason why Karna was so incensed with, and was making a special mention about the women while attacking Madra was because of their deviant ways and the fact that they were quite the contrary of what an ideal woman was expected to be. The author(s) of the epic thus used this occasion, among other things, to spell out what according to them constituted unwomanly conduct, one which was liable for condemnation. In short, it would not make much sense to debate whether, owing to a relatively unorthodox environment, the women of Madra actually did whatever they are accused of here (and those of other regions did the same or did not), as nothing is never as uniform or simplistic, and we can only see from this that a major reason for a particular region being branded as corrupted and ruined was if the women there did not

behave as per the parameters of 'ideal' womanhood. Thus a region where controls on women were lax was worthy of nothing but the worst kind of denunciation. There is a second thing which must be taken note of. In the course of his inveigh against Madra, Karṇa once or twice also mentioned Gāndhāra in the same breath, as being equally contaminated a place; without paying heed to the fact that the mother of the friend to whom he had pledged all his support and even his life, and their biggest ally and initiator of all their vicious schemes were both from Gāndhāra. Both Madra and Gāndhāra thus appear to be areas outside the pale of the 'civilized', Brahmanised society that is at the core of the epic plot, where supposedly degraded practices and people abounded. Aloka Parasher (1991 :202) is also of the opinion that the people inhabiting the north-western fringe of the subcontinent among others were only partly (or not) Brahmanised at different phases and were branded as *mlecchas*, even if inconsistently. It is a surprise then as to how women (who were actually quite in conformity with the Brahmanical norms of womanhood) from such regions were rather effortlessly married into the famed Kuru household. The strongest incentive for such marriages can then be located in the desire of the ruling house to cement important political alliances and secure collaborators; this point being proved up to the hilt by the indispensable roles played by Śakuni and even Śalya.

Another story in the *Mahābhārata* connected with the land of Madra is that of king Aśvapati and his famous and hallowed daughter Sāvitrī, who brought back her husband from the noose of Yama. This text contains instances of the means of procuring a daughter which however are indirect as daughters are never wished for over and above sons. The two examples of daughters being born through a sacrifice are Draupadī and Sāvitrī, although both of them were originally unasked for and were born either additionally or in place of sons. To recount the story of the latter: the childless king Aśvapati's vow to get a child was quite rigorous. He relentlessly limited his food, missed out on every sixth meal, disciplined his senses, was self-restrained and offered oblations with the *sāvitrī* formula a hundred thousand times for eighteen years. Finally a gratified and pleased Sāvitrī arose from his *agnihotra* and granted him a boon. Although the king asked for many sons from her, she told him that according to the irreversible pronouncement that Brahmā had made, a girl was to be born to him and he should accept it without a word. Aśvapati agreed and "planted a seed" in his eldest queen who before long gave birth to a daughter, for whom the king "performed the rites" and whom the king and the brāhmaṇas named Sāvitrī as she had been born by the grace of the Goddess

who was her namesake. Aśvapati later had a hundred sons in addition because of the boon that his daughter had obtained for him from Yama. This story is also akin to those of Mādhavī and Citrāngadā, the only daughters of their parents. The only difference is that in these two cases the father's heirs are their grandsons whereas Aśvapati finally gets sons for himself through his daughter. Despite this difference the men in all these cases owed their successors to their daughters.

The *Mahābhārata* also contains some instances when the onset of a woman's menstrual cycle gave her a free hand in an important decision impacting her life. As each menstrual period was uncomfortably viewed as the loss of one son, we find anxious fathers working hard to find their daughters a husband to escape incurring the sin of aborticide. But just in case all the father's efforts came to naught, the girl herself was allowed to find someone for herself, and this text depicts girls like Sāvitrī (and Damayantī) taking matters into their own hands (III.277.25-36). Thus, an actually quite young girl is sometimes conceived of as having a remarkable agency. This also gives us an example of a third way of getting married mentioned in the context of Madra, and along with bride-price and the *svayamvara* we also now have a girl finding someone for herself.

The *Mahābhārata* includes no people of any consequence from amongst the Kāmbojas in the Kuru household. The name of the Kāmboja king was Sudakṣiṇa and the Kāmbojas it is said were defeated by Arjuna before Yudhiṣṭhira's *rājasūya*, who took their army but 'rejected their poor resources' (II.24.22). But out of these 'poor resources' the Kāmbojas apparently sent hides of some special deer and fleeces of special sheep, expensive blankets, feline furs embroidered with gold, deerskin jackets, chariots, women, cows, hundreds and thousands of horses and three hundred times a hundred camel mares as tribute at the *rājasūya* ceremony (II.45.19-20 and II.47.3-4).

What now remains to be done is to see how all these regions and the people residing therein are perceived of in the text itself, or rather by the author(s) of the text. As already pointed out, Śakuni was referred to as the 'man from the mountains', as Gāndhāra was obviously mountainous terrain. Also, once during the dicing, Yudhiṣṭhira while describing his next stake to Śakuni said that, "I have countless cattle and horses and milch cows and sheep and goats, whatever belongs to *our color of people east of the Indus*..." (II.58.5. Emphasis added). Secondly, Kuntī while berating Mādrī just after their husband had died once called her a 'Bactrian woman' (or *Bāhlīki*. I.116.21). Thirdly, once when the ascetic Mārkaṇḍeya had come to visit the

Pāṇḍavas while they were living in exile in the forest, and was talking to them about the four different ages, he mentioned how barbarian kings would rule the earth in the Kali age among other things. Interestingly, he mentioned the Kambojas along with the Scythians, Greeks, Pulindas, Āndhras etc. who would be kings in the Kali age (III.186.29-30).

As the foregoing thus indicates, there is perceivable in the text itself a specific sort of attitude for the region of the Panjāb or the northwestern region of the subcontinent and the people who inhabited it. Needless to add, this attitude was one of difference, a difference between 'us' and 'them', although not as sharp and neither articulated as such. Although people from the region were quite comfortably co-opted into the mainstream, there certainly remained some elements of tension. But this was by no means specific to the Panjāb. On the contrary, it was just one among those autochthonous places which lay outside *Āryāvarta*, which needed to be subjugated, either by conciliation (Madra) or by coercion (Gāndhāra after the war), if and when the rightful ruler (by epic standards that is) decided to perform rituals to establish his suzerainty. It is in this context that Śakuni's son (and even wife) is mentioned, whom Arjuna defeated when Yudhiṣṭhira's sacrificial horse of the *aśvamedha* rite had wandered into Gāndhāra (XIV.84.17–XIV.85). In this regard, D.C. Sircar mentions that the Panjāb (or the Pañcanada—the land of the five rivers) was also known as the Vāhika country (Sircar 1971:237), and also that the *Mahābhārata* refers to Yavana-Kāmboja-Gāndhāra in the same breath (*Ibid*: 196). All this therefore further proves what we have been saying so far; that the very make up of the Panjāb region was perceived rather differently than that of the core region. In spite of all this, two mother figures or two queens of the Kuru dynasty and the two foremost supporters in the feud hailed from this region. So regardless of what might have been thought about the region as such, certain people belonging to it were held in quite an immense amount of esteem.

The *Mahābhārata* in the main contains quite a few instances of relatively strongwilled and outspoken women and consequently the Panjāb region cannot be isolated as such in this regard. Gāndhārī was also one among such women. Portrayed as someone who had a very strong sense of justice and fairness, she did not think twice in discerning right from wrong and in unequivocally admitting that her son was foolish and evil. Even when the news was broken to her that Duryodhana had been killed by Bhīma, she was not as unhappy about the fact that he had been killed, for that was the consequence of his own faults and the actions of his allies, as she was for the fact that he had

been killed unfairly, that Bhīma had swerved from his *dharma*, and that too in the very presence of Kṛṣṇa (XI.13.14-19). In addition, she was vocal to the extent of strongly rebuking almost every man in her life, right from her husband to her son and brother for their misdeeds. But she never criticized her brother directly and it is very surprising that there are absolutely no instances of a conversation taking place between brother and sister; with the former just being too busy with his nephew. Śakuni does on occasion talk to his brother-in-law though. Mādrī on the other hand is nothing like Gāndhārī and is comparatively a nondescript character. She has not been given many chances to speak and she does so only when she wants children or wants to die along with her husband. There is thus a stark opposition between the figures of Mādrī and Gāndhārī, and the only thing in which their lives were a little similar was that both of them were married to men handicapped in one way or the other—the former's husband was impotent and the latter's was blind.

Almost a similar pattern is repeated with the men, though not quite. Between them, the Gāndhāran character Śakuni is present in the greater part of the narrative and has a larger role than the Madran; though Śalya dominates more during the war. But both these men were made to fight for and further the interests of the Kauravas, regardless of where the loyalties of at least one of them originally lay. The Pāṇḍavas were then deprived of any real support from any of their maternal uncles as one of them was cleverly brought over by the Kauravas to their side and the other (i.e. Vasudeva) was nowhere on the scene. The latter was probably overshadowed by his son, who gave all the aid that the Pāṇḍavas could possibly require. Another interesting fact that can be noticed is that it is a brother-sister pair that is significant in the context of the two regions. In other words, from both the regions of Gāndhāra and Madra it is only the brother-sister duo that is conspicuous whereas the older generation is living in oblivion. And to say that the brother out of the duo was given a more eminent position would be labelling the obvious. This is not to say that a woman like Gāndhārī was any less prominent, but her prominence was limited to household (which being a dynastic household obviously always had political undertones) affairs like controlling her wayward son and being a model of wifely devotion; within which she clearly exercised a fair amount of agency. Śakuni on the other hand had a distinct political dimension to his functions. As the clash between the cousins was for the patrimony and the throne of the king, he, by siding with one party and by actively initiating, negotiating and winning a prior contest (the dicing) for the inheritance was directly involved in the politics of the land, and helped his nephew in getting

or in trying to get a lucrative and powerful material advantage. The nephew then on his part had a strong politico-economic reason for his attachment to his maternal uncle. Hence, this responsibility of Śakuni was unprecedented in its scope and Śalya's pales in comparison. The latter was only called upon when the war bugles had already been sounded in order to enlist him and his army on anyone side. He was definitely a far superior warrior than Śakuni, but Śakuni was more shrewd-minded as well as a clever instigator. Śalya as Karna's charioteer could only help his nephew Arjuna indirectly and not by openly being involved in affairs of the state.

In the final analysis it can be said that the region of the Panjāb in the *Mahābhārata* was a region of many possibilities. It was distinctive no doubt but the representations of some of the people (like Gāndhārī and even Mādri) belonging to it were made to conform to the utmost level of the normative definitions of womanhood or manhood. It was a region that remained both loyal and voluntarily subjugated to both the contenders in the conflict and probably for this reason did not have much of its faults or non-conformist aspects explicitly and critically assessed and exposed most of the time. Even if what Karna said about Madra and Gāndhāra was true, its people at least in the Kuru court helped cover it up by their trustworthiness, fidelity and virtue. The tensions and their awareness inherent in integrating a peripheral region and its inhabitants, which did surface now and then, never became blatant. Gender and social relations as practiced by the people of the region were also more fluid, as in the example of the role of the maternal uncle, the giving of bride-price etc. Very interestingly, Teun Goudriaan (Gupta et. al. 1979: 17-18) has even found evidence for orgiastic rites being practiced by the Vāhikas and the Madras in the *Mahābhārata* and accordingly even believes that some aspects of Tantric worship may have originated in the mountainous regions of the North-West of India like Gāndhāra (*Ibid*:37). Moreover, the *Mahābhārata* or epic literature itself does not completely belong to the Brahmanical genre (normative literature that is) and displays an alternative view of society. Within this text in addition, the Panjāb and the north-western part of the subcontinent were also visualized somewhat differently. It was thus a difference within a difference.

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HEROIC DEEDS OF WOMEN IN ANCIENT INDIA

Rajpal*

The best way to understand the spirit of a civilization is to the study of the history and status of women in it.¹ The position of women in any society is a true index of its cultural and spiritual level, and the attitude of a community towards them has a great social significance.²

In ancient India girls in ruling families used to receive some military and administrative training. Kshatriya family ladies used to receive a fairly good amount of military training. Literary and archaeological sources gleaned that they performed the duty as guards of the King and in the royal military. South Indian inscriptions of the medieval period disclose the existence of many heroines defending their hearths and homes in times of danger. It is quite well known that Rajput princesses were adepts in the use of the sword and spear. They could lead the armies and direct the government in the hour of need.³

Rigveda furnished the information that the wife of the Khela risi, the Viśapala, fought with enemy with her husband. In this war her leg was broken and later on treated by the Aśvino.⁴ Again Mudgalani, the wife of Mudgala, helped her husband in hunting out the robbers. She fought with them and won the 1000 cows.⁵

In *Rigveda* it is also mentioned that slave Namuchi made the army of women.⁶ Danu, the mother of Vritrasura also co-operate with his son in the

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1. Rajpal, *Women in Early Medieval North India*, p.1
2. Henry Maine, *Early History of Institutions*, p.339.
3. A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, p. 22.
4. Ambika Prasad Vajpai, *Hindu Rajya Sastra*, p. 136.
5. *Rigveda*. 10.102.2.

उत स्म वातो वहति वासो अस्या। अधिरथं यदजयत सहस्रम्।
रथीरभून्मुद्गलानी गविष्टौ भरे कृतं व्यचेदिन्द्रसेना ॥

6. *Ibid.*, 5.30.9

स्त्रियो हि दासं आयुधानि चक्रे किंवा करन्नवलाअस्यसेनाः
अन्तर्हरण्यदुभे अस्य धेने ऊयोप प्रैधुधये दस्यमिन्द्रे ॥

field of war. It is famous saying that in the Devāsura war Kaikeyī was present with her husband Dasaratha, the helping hand of Indra.

In Mahābhārata the courage of Draupadi has described at the time of svayamvara. She expressed her disapproval of Karna and prevented him from taking part in the competition for her. She typifies the ideal heroic women full of force and vigour. On various occasions, she incited her husband to destroy the people who have insulted her.⁷

The queen of Massaga, Cleophes was directing the attack against Alexander the great, when her husband was killed in the battle with the invader.⁸ The example of the queen commander leading the struggle for freedom in person brought the entire womanhood, of the locality into the fight, while their heroism also infected the mercenaries whose initial vacillation was replaced by a determination to prefer death to dishonour.⁹

About the heroic deeds of women *Arthaśāstra*¹⁰ provides information that the personal attendants of the king were all women. The emperors usually remained under the protection of the female bodyguards.¹¹ On getting up, the king shall be received by troops of women armed with bows and arrows. Independent evidence also supports the *Arthaśāstra* view. The Greek envoy Megasthenes¹² who lived in the court of Chandragupta Maurya wrote that amazons guarded the emperor's harem and formed the main bodyguard of the king when he moved out. Any food to be taken, any garments, flowers, ornaments to be worn by king, any scents or unguents to be used by him, had to be tasted by his trusted women, before it was given to the king.

After that we have the information of the queens or regent queens those who earn the fame for their good deeds or shown courage in administration. In the second century B.C., queen Nayanikā, also known as Nāganikā, was at the helm of affairs of the Sātāvāhana empire, during the minority of her son.¹³ Next we got the information of Kumardevī, from the

7. Buddha Prakash, *Evolution of Heroic Tradition in Ancient Punjab*, p.26.

8. Ramashankar Tripathi, *History of Ancient India*, p. 120.

9. R.C. Majumdar (ed.), *Age of Imperial Kanauj*, p. 46.

10. *Kautilya's Arthashastra*, Chapter XXI by R. Shamasastri.

11. E.H.I. 4th ed. p.130 and Note. Strabo observes that these women were bought from their parents (XV, 55). Kautilya also says that "On getting up from the bed, the king shall be received by troops of women, armed with bows and arrows (*Arthashastra*, BK. I, Ch. 21. Shamasarti, 3rd (ed.) 1929, p. 41 cf. also प्रविश्व शार्ङ्गहस्ता यवनी (Sakuntla, Act VI, p. 224, Vikramorvasi, Act V, 10.123).

12. P. Thomas, *Indian women through the ages*, pp.70-71.

13. Tripat Sharma, *Women in Ancient India*, p. 31.

Chandragupta-Kumardevī type gold coins issued by Chandragupta-I himself, it has been, inferred that Kumardevī was ruling jointly with her husband. In this joint rule she was representing her parents, the lichchhavis.¹⁴ It has further been observed that her role was superior considering the augmentation in the status of the imperial Guptas (her husband using the title Mahārajadhiraja for the first time in his family) provided by her matrimony and its proudly acknowledged by Samudragupta by calling himself as Lichchavi dauhitra.¹⁵

In Kashmir valley region we have the two or three examples of ladies, those who did heroic deeds at that time. Nona was one of them who played a great role when her master or king was in distress.¹⁶ She was soft spoken, trust worthy and worldly wise. She had the qualities of good negotiator and had proved a helping hand to Bhoja when he needed the services of a mediator to solve tricky problems. To end the hostility and make friendship with king Jayasimha, Bhoja sent Nonā on the goodwill mission. Jayasimha immediately recognized her mission and readily opened negotiations. The talks held with her had borne fruitful result and they got an agreement settled.¹⁷

Another example of this region was Sillā. She was a royal cadet and had a fief in her own right in the reign of Śussala (1112-1120 A.D.). She was born in a cultured, wealthy and aristocratic family and got fine military training from her father. She had good experience to commanding the troops.¹⁸ In the reign of Śussala there were no peace and internal disturbance prevailed every where. The number of unreliable officers were more in comparison to that of the honest officers in the court of Śussala. Mallakhosha and Prithvihara both were ambitious and skillful in intriguing. Prithvihara had already joined Bhikshāchara and was preparing to launch another attack. The enemy's force reached nearer and was stationed at Vijayēśvara. Mallakhosha also was proved traitor and he joined the enemy troops. After this, Bhikshāchara and Prithvihara had proceeded towards Śrinagar by another route. At this juncture Śussala became indecisive whether he should first wipe out the enemy at vijayēśvara or immediately return to his capital to defend it. The enemy troops defeated his commander-in-chief Suji on the outskirts of Śrinagar.¹⁹ When king Śussala was crossing the bridge over Gambhira, it broke down and many soldiers

14. JRASB, XLVII, 1937, p. 105.

15. R.K. Mookerji, *Gupta Empire*, p. 14.

16. Rajpal, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

17. *Rajatarangini*, VIII, 3117.

18. P.N. Bazaz, *Daughters of the Vitasta*, p. 101.

19. *Rajatarangini*, VIII, 1069.

along with king fell in the water. Most of the troops remained behind and could not cross the bridge. They were in dithering stage, being leaderless and the enemy was following them to destroy. Silla was among them who left behind. She took over the charge of the army and conducted the troops from Vijayesvara to Devasaras.²⁰ She arranged the troops properly and boldly faced the jubilant Mallakoshta and his blood thirsty men. The enemy troops were far better than her troops. The bold lady Śilla gave the fierce and tough fight to the Mallakoshta. He became apprehensive and sent message to Bhikshāchara for some army. Prithvihara arrived soon along with more army and now the attack became doubled. Earlier Śilla braved the danger and did not budge an inch. After that the casualties in royal army increased and the brave lady Śilla was attacked by Prithvihara and was killed.

Chudda was another brave woman in Śussala's (1112-1120 A.D.) army. Mallakoshta moved towards the capital. Śussala was already engaged in fighting. He gave order to Chudda and her son Panchachandra to move against Mallakoshta. This job was very difficult. But king Śussala was very confident to the bravery of Chudda. He thought she was a lady of honour and she could take risk of life to serve the honour of the king. Both the sides brought their might into full play to destroy each other.²¹ At last one day rebels displayed signs of weakness and many of them got terror stricken. It has been recorded that the fierce attack compelled the rebels to start laying arms down. Mallakoshta left the field and fled away finding his defeat obvious.²² Chudda and her son was honoured in the capital after performing rare and valiant deeds. Śussala gave them the joint ownership of Lohara.²³ However she was murdered by a notorious ruffian Tikka.²⁴

Chachnamā informed us that Rani Bāī, the queen of Dāhar vigorously fought against Kasīm after the death of her husband.²⁵

Armed women are also depicted on the walls of Khajurāho temples. It seems that they are having these weapons for self defence or hunting purpose. In these type of scenes a lady is depicted having a long rod at the end of which three pointed leaf shaped sharp knives are attached.²⁶ In another scene

20. P.N. Bazaz, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

21. Rajpal, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

22. *Rajatarangini*, VIII, 1137.

23. P.N. Bazaz, *op. cit.*, 106.

24. *Rajatarangini*, VIII, 1136-37.

25. *Chachnama*, p. 153.

26. Base of Kandriya Mahadev temple and Jagdambi temple, Khajuraho.

one woman is depicted with Parśu²⁷ and other has a bow and a number of arrows²⁸ kept in the quiver tied at the back of her left shoulder. In one scene a woman²⁹ is shown holding a small knife and stands in a pose as if ready to attack. In the back-side of the same temple a woman is depicted having a big sword by its handle in her left hand is resting at her waist and her right hand is on top of the sword. In a temple³⁰ an armed man and woman both are standing. From the above discussion we can easily conclude that in this period women were having arms for their safety and for hunting. They would have also took part in wars.

In the Chāhamanas dynasty we have the example of Kurmādevī, the queen of the brave Rajput Samara Śingh and princess of Pāttan. Samar Śingh died in the second battle of Tarāin in 1192 A.D. Due to the childhood of her son, Kurmādevī took over the charge of administration as regent queen. She was adept in administration and possessed military valour. She showed the extraordinary courage when Qutubudin attacked on Mewar and the Rajput chiefs felt helpless in the absence of their king.³¹ She headed the Rajputs and gave battle to Qutubudin near Amber, where she defeated and wounded him.

Naiki devī was the mother of Mularaja II and Bhimadeva II and the chief queen of Ajayapala belongs to the Chalukya dynasty. Mularaja II was still a child when he got the throne (1176 A.D.). The mother of Mularaja II, Naiki devi was all in all in the state and all the powers of the state were vested in her. Merutunga³² records that she was bold lady, who showed her boldness when she fought against Mlechchhas (Muslims) at Gadurgarh or Gadarghatta, taking her son in her lap. It is described in Prabandhachintamani that she was helped by God in her strength due to her chaste life. It was the rainy season and she got the victory and defeated mlechchhas (Muslims).

Women from Karnataka seem to have led the way in this matter. A heroine from Mysore is known to have died in a village affray at Siddanhalli in 1041 A.D. In 1264 A.D. another heroine from Karnataka was honoured by the government of the day with the reward of a nose jewel in recognition of her bravery in overpowering a dacoit.

27. Right out side walls, vaman temple, Khajuraho.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Left outside wall, Duladeo temple Khajuraho.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Prithvirajavijay, IX, 134.

32. Prabandha Chintamani, pp. 154-55.

INTERFACE OF ENVIRONMENT AND SETTLEMENTS IN EARLY JAMMU REGION

Monica*

Environment is the combination of the external Physical conditions that effect and influence the growth, development and Survival of living organism including air, water, soil, trees and their interrelations. In other words, Environment refers to all surrounding or modify as the aggregate of Social and Cultural Conditions that influence the life of an individual or community.¹ The Natural resources, geomorphology, availability of food, water and safe dwellings are some of the basic requirements for any place to become the habitat of human beings. Jammu region provided all these basic necessities, therefore, a variety of human settlements sprang here.

The word 'Settlement' stands for the places of human dwellings and human activities or in other words, settlement pattern studies the range of different people from food gatherer to food producer.²

In the context of the above an attempt is being made to study how people adjusted themselves to nature or how they adapted to natural environment himself for their survival in the region of Jammu. Jammu region provides a chronological sequence in a virtual horizontal section for the human activities from the pre-historic to modern period. The evidence of early man's culture have come mainly from the Shivaliks, the river terraces and the alluvial deposits. The first evidence of pre-historic man is *Ramapithecus* and pongid remains which was reported by Dutta in 1976 from the Shivalik hills of Ramnagar.³ Thomas and Verma in 1979 described *Sivaladapis paleindicus* from Lower Shivaliks of Ramnagar.⁴ In 1980

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1. A.P. Singh, *Concept of Environment in Ancient Art and Architecture*, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 2003, p. 15.
2. G.N. Srivastva, *Ancient Settlement Pattern in Orissa*, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 2006, p.IX.
3. Rajanj Gaur, *Environment and Ecology of Early Man in North-West India*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1987, p.14.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Thomas recorded two upper molars of *Sivapithecus indicus* from the Chinji formation of Lower Shivaliks of Ramnagar.⁵

A few fossils have been found from Kiwli, Rajouli and Nagrota about 20 km. North-West of Jammu.⁶ The fossils include *Stegolophodon* and *Hippotamus*. In the course of exploration in upper Shivaliks of Jammu area, G.L. Badam and R.K. Ganjoo have brought to light fossil of stegolophodon of different species for e.g. *St. elephas*, *St. insignis*, *St. ganesa* etc. They also found *Trionyx* (turtle) and *Crocodylus* species of reptiles.⁷ The faunal assemblage indicated a Savannah type of environment during the deposition of the upper Shivaliks sediments around Jammu.

This shows that the Jammu region was inhabited by apes and the environment provided all those basic requirements which were required for their survival.

We can not think of human advance in ancient times without the exploitation of natural resources. The process of human adaptation to environmental conditions was accompanied foremost by the introduction of tools and their use by the primitive man. In the making of the stone tools here was a definite evidence of the beginning of man's attempt to adopt to the nature by applying his mind and making use of locally available material for better functioning. The habitation of the early men in the Paleolithic period in Jammu region is generally inferred from the distribution of the tools, they left behind in many places specially in river basins. Stone tools found at *Lakhanpur* from Ravi dating back to the Pleistocene period.⁸ A large number of tools were obtained from various sites such as *Kurro Pinyani*, *Terra*, *Mah* and *Jagatpur*.⁹ These consisted of Pre-sohan type of huge flakes, rolled and heavily patinated, early sohan, unifacial pebble choppers and clactonian and Levalloisian flakes.¹⁰ Numerous stone tools have been found indicating the settlements in the Jammu region. The pre-sohan flakes are large and made up of quartzite material. The region around the village *sutah* on the right bank of *Basantar* river near *Samba* also yielded early stone age tools, comprising a bifacial hand axe, unifacial choppers, scrappers discoids and flakes.¹¹ From these evidences we can assume that

5. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

6. *Indian Archaeology*, 1982-83, A Review, ASI, 1985, pp. 31-32.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

8. *Indian Archaeology*, 1965-66, A Review, ASI, 1973, p.19.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

11. *Indian Archaeology*, 1971-72, A Review, ASI, 1975, p.24.

the initial mode of sustenance for humans in this region was hunting and gathering. Most of these artifacts were made with the objective of assisting them in their quest for food, hunting and gathering. Stone tools were primarily used for cutting plants, digging roots, crops and scrapping wood.

The beginning of agricultural activities is considered to be a major event in nature and human interaction. It is generally associated with Neolithic revolution. When man moves towards agriculture several significant changes followed that may be legitimately called as heralding the beginning of new phase in man's relationship with environment. Malpur is the only excavated site in the Jammu region where we have found evidences of Neolithic period. To know the details of the settlement on the evidence of artifacts a trial excavation was conducted at Malpur in 1992.¹² Five layers were encountered in the digging of which layer one is humus while layer two to four form the compact natural alluvial soil mixed with stone tools and flakes. Alluvial soil is considered as the best soil for cultivation. The Neolithic artifacts found in the form of celt, chisel, ring stone, grinder mullers, blades and scrappers.¹³ The tools were made up of sand stone and few polished ones were made on black basalt. Polished stone tools of Neolithic found from *Malpur, Gudpath, Amogharota, Kurro, Mah, Dayalchak* and *Kuta* at foot hills of Shivaliks indicate some sort of food producing stage.¹⁴ The beginning of settled agriculture marks a significant phase in resource use practice. There is a clear shift in favour of soil as a natural resource and the use of stone for making tools also undergoes a change with much greater variety come into vogue. The ground stone artifacts of this period which were well rounded and had smooth long edges made the cultivation of soil an easier process. Areas where fresh deposits of soil would come periodically either as silts from floods or from decayed matter were obviously preferred for agriculture.

As a result of complex interplay of sedentary societies with their environments, a new social and economic structure emerged. With permanent settlement, man adopted new technological methods in the manufacture and use of pottery, the discovery of smelting of copper and its alloys, and their use in the manufacture of tools and weapons. All these technological discoveries have been noted in the material culture of *Manda (Akhnoor)* situated about 28 km North-West of Jammu along the river

12. *Indian Archaeology*, 1993-94, A Review, ASI, 2000, p. 53.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

Chenab in the foot hills of Pir Panjal range.¹⁵ The excavation is represented by the occupational deposit which is marked by the arrival of Harappans. The Harappan pottery consists of redware, both plain and painted which include jars, dishes, dishes on stand, beakers and goblet.¹⁶ Other associated finds include a copper double spiral-headed pin, tanged bone arrow heads, terracotta bangles, terracotta cakes, potsherds bearing incised Harappan script, chert blade and unfinished seal and a few saddle querns and pestles.¹⁷ All assemblage at this site are varied and clearly intend to serve many purposes for the better survival of human beings.

Ambaran a Kushana site, in Akhnur revealed the cultural sequence of pre-Kushana, Kushana, post-Kushana and post-Gupta period.¹⁸ Akhnur was the major entrepot of early Jammu region.¹⁹ The importance of Akhnur lies in the fact that it is located at a point where river Chenab for the first time become navigable.²⁰ Pre-Kushana period of Ambaran yield grey-ware sherds of bowls and red-ware vases which suggests evidence of small habitation, which is followed by the establishment of Buddhist Monastery. Burnt bricks were used in the Monastery usually measuring 36×38×24×6-7 cm. The important antiquities of the period include the reliquary and its contents which include thirty circular sheets of gold, two circular rimmed thin sheets of gold, two circular rimmed thin sheets of silver, one hundred fifty micro beads of pearls and twelve cylindrical coral beads.²¹ In the structure of post-Kushana period, bricks and brickbats of earlier structure reused, mostly in strengthening the walls which most likely, suffered damages due to flash floods in the river Chenab. The material culture of Ambaran and its location clearly reveals that it was an early urban settlement in the region such an urban stage man utilized rivers for commercial activities such as transportation of timber etc. Ambaran was the result of various technologies which was adopted by man for extraction and manufacture of copper, iron, gold and silver artifacts. The excessive use of all these resources lead imbalance in the environment, which resulted in flash floods in Chenab. The flash floods in Chenab were responsible for the decline of Ambaran.

15. I-A - 1975-76, A Review, 1980, pp. 19-20.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

18. *Indian Archaeology*, 2000-01, A Review, 2006, pp. 47-50.

19. Y.B. Singh, *Essays on the Culture and Art of Northern India*, Jay Kay Publishers, Jammu, 1999, p. 125.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

21. *Indian Archaeology*, 2000-01, A Review, 2006, p. 53.

The study of the above major sites in Jammu region clearly reveals the dependency of man on environment and vice versa. The environment provided the basic requirements for the pre-historic man for his survival. During the Paleolithic stage man made use of locally available stones as tools. With the help of these, he tapped the natural resources. Subsequently during the Neolithic stage, he developed various techniques to utilize the natural resources and made ring stone, chisel, celts, grinder, mullers, pestles for practicing agriculture. This is also an indication of a sedentary life style. Man's transition from this mode of existence to the urban life is reflected in the material culture of the Harappans. The Harappan site at Akhnur (Manda) has revealed the use of burnt bricks, copper, gold and silver objects by the people of the region for making of tools and ornaments. The phenomenon of urbanism continued well into the Kushana period which has been discussed earlier.

A STUDY OF MAJOR CENTRES OF NĀGA - WORSHIP IN JAMMU REGION

Mehreen Sheikh*

Nāga-cult is one of the oldest cults not merely in India but throughout the ancient world.¹ In India, the tribal people worshipping the Nāga-deities living on the entire northern belt of the country.² There are various literary as well as archaeological evidences to show that there are Nāgas in almost all parts of the country.

The earliest most reference related to this cult can be traced from the time of Indus valley civilization in which snakes found depicted on various Harappan figurines.³ In *Atharvaveda*, they are described as the protectors of six quarters.⁴ Moreover, epics like *Mahābhārata* and *Puranas* like *Matysa Puraṇa*, *Padma Puraṇa*, *Vishnudharmaottara Puraṇa*, glorify the cult.⁵ Nāgas, have been referred by the Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hian and Huen Tsang many a time.⁶ Thus, it is clear from above references that Nāga-cult acquired an eminent position in India vary from early period.

Likewise, the region of Jammu has been also witnessing its popularity which is evidenced through literary as well as archaeological sources. Various Sanskrit sources such as the *Vasuki Puraṇa*, and the *Vishnudharmottara Puraṇa*, of the Jammu region and the works of Kashmir belonging to early and early medieval period like the *Nilamatapuraṇa*, and the *Rājatarāṅgini* have referred to it in detail.

Different archaeological sources like the Bāoli sculptures, icons, shrines, Nāga images found in various temples of Jammu Region etc. have played a vibrant role in describing the importance of Nāga-Worship in the region of Jammu.

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1. Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, Introduction, p. 1.
2. Sharma, S.K., *Antiquities, History, Culture and Shrines of Jammu*, p. 85.
3. Ratnagar Shereen, *Understanding Harappa*, New Delhi, 2001, p. 111.
4. Kumari, Ved Ghai, *The Nilamatapurana*, Vol.1, A Critical Edition, J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar, 1968, p. 182.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

The evolution and growth of Nāga-worship has been well traced by the *Nilamatapūraṇa*. It is a text of 6th-7th century and deals primarily with Kashmir region. But some verses of the *puraṇa* deal with the geographical and ethnographic features of the region of Jammu as well. Likewise there is clear cut mention of *Madradesh*⁷ along with certain important tribes of the region like the *Mādras*, the *Dārvas* and the *Abhisars*. Mention of river Tawi or *Tohi*⁸ has also been there in the *Puraṇa*. From this, we can gather with the help of legends associated with the Nāga-cult that Nāgas were persecuted from the valley of Kashmir to Bhaderwah and Kishtwar from where they reached to the plains of Jammu.

According to the *Rājatarangiṇi*, Nāgas were referred to be the earliest-most settlers of the valley of Kashmir. But the name of 'Jammu' region has not been clearly mentioned in it. In fact, the various Rajas of Babbapura,⁹ now Babor, 17 miles east of Jammu has been mentioned in it along with their historical details. Balor as Vallapura, Bhaderwah as *Bhadrawaksa* and Kishtwar state under the name *Kashtvata* have been mentioned in the chronicle.¹⁰

The sources such as – the *Vishnupuraṇa* and the *Vasukipuraṇa* deal primarily with the growth and evolution of Nāga-cult in the region of Jammu. In *Vishnupuraṇa*, *Vishnu* is described as lord of Nāgas and stated to have made *Śesa* the king of the Nāgas.¹¹ Further *Vasukipuraṇa*, tells us how *Vasuki Nāga*, the king of Nāgas, acquire superior and miraculous position in this region.¹²

In the Jammu region, there are certain places where Nāga-cult finds its relevance from the ancient times. And even today these places are serving as important Nāga centres. All these centres in the entire Jammu region need to be divided on certain physiological grounds like that those found their relevance on the hilly terrain such as — Bhaderwah, Kishtwar,

7. Nila, *Nilamatapurana : A Cultural and Literary Study*, Vol. II, Srinagar, 1968, v. 82, 114-118.

8. *Ibid.*, v. 120.

9. Kalhana, *The Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, Eng. Translation by M.A. Stein, Delhi, 1989, pp. 588-590.

10. Hutchison and Vogel, *History of Punjab Hill States*, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1933, pp. 47, 48.

11. Wilson, H.H., *The Vishnupurana, A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition*, Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, p. 148.

12. Sharma, S.K., *Antiquities, History, Culture and Shrines of Jammu*, p. 85.

Padder, Saroor, Nagseni as well as in the plains of Jammu which included Kathua, Udhampur, Ramnagar, Akhnoor, etc.

First and foremost among the major centres of Nāga-Worship is the region of Bhaderwah.¹³

Bhaderwah has been considered to be the ancient-most region of Jammu and was called as '*Bhadrawakasa*' by Kalhana, which means 'a good place of relaxation'.¹⁴ There is clear cut mention of *Basak-Nag* or *Vasuki Nag* in the folk-lore of this region. In this, Vasuki-Nag has been mentioned chief of Nāgas or the snake-god and is worshipped all over the hills. According to traditional records, Basak-Nag originally dwelt in Kashmir but some enmity has grown between the *Vasuki Nag* and the *Garuda* (Vehicle of Vishnu). So, Vasuki have to leave the valley and took shelter on Kundkaplas, the highest peak in Bhaderwah.¹⁵

Various shrines and temples associated with Vasuki are situated in this region and various festivals like Nag-Panchmi and Nāga-Ka-puja are celebrated in order to please him. Also, in these temples, images of snake-gods as well as water-bodies associated with a particular deity has been worshipped.

In Bhaderwah, there are several temples in the name of Vasuki, among which the twin temples of Nagar and Gatha are the most important one. In Nagar temple, pictures of *Vasak* and *Jimut Vahan* have been carved on its walls, stone idols of Vasak along with circles of snakes on their heads were being made.¹⁶ Infact, in this *Wasak-Nag* temple, Vasuki has been worshipped in human form as an incarnation of Vishnu. Also, it is believed by people of Gatha that their Vasuki Nag temple is the real one because the holy mace (*Chhari*) to Kailash, leaves from this place.¹⁷ Other prominent shrines of this region are – The shrine dedicated to Vasuki's elder brother *Santan Nāga*, situated in the village of Satingal, on route to Padri Pass. And the shrine of *Savar nāga*, lies near Chintah Valley.¹⁸

Moreover, Nāgas have also found their close association with water-bodies in almost all parts of Bhaderwah. People could worship these *bāolis*

13. Ganhar, J.N., *Jammu—Shrines and Pilgrimages*, Ganhar Publications, New Delhi, p. 65.

14. Aseer, Kishtwari, *Focus on J&K*, p. 1012.

15. Charak, S.D.S., *History and Culture of Himalayan States*, Vol. VII, p. 230.

16. *Op. cit.*, p. 1142.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 1143.

18. Charak, S.D.S., *History and Culture of Himalayan States*, Vol. VII, p. 231.

or water-bodies in order to please their nag-deities. Important among them are – Gupta Ganga, on the bank of Neeru Nallah and Ashapati or Sown Baoli, 8 to 10 miles from Bhaderwah town. Temples as well as shrines have been built on the *Bāolis*. People take bath in these water-bodies on specific occasions related to Nāgas like *Nag-Panchmi* and also distributed offerings after the bath.

The most important water-bāoli in the region of Bhaderwah is Sounbaini or Ashpati which is towards the south-east of Bhaderwah town and it also acts as place of pilgrimage for whole of the region. According to popular belief, water comes out of spring once in a year on *Pitri Amavasya* and on this day people of Bhaderwah and adjacent villages take bath in it. In this way, this water-bāoli has become an important part of religious devotion of whole of Jammu region.

Like Bhaderwah, Kishtwar has been also inhabited by various Nāga families and has been considered to be the ancient most town of Jammu as well. In *Rājatarangīni*, Kishtwar is referred to as '*Kashthavata*' which literally means 'garden of wood'.¹⁹ People of this area were the worshippers of snakes and serpents and this had been evidenced by the names of various springs having 'Nāga' their suffixes like–Mulnag, Godershnag, Bimmalnag, etc.²⁰ Various references of the past also depict that Nāga-cult predominates various regions of Kishtwar like Padder, Nagseni, Saroor etc. As in the Padder region, the doors of various ancient temples contain carved images of Nāgas, to a larger extent.

A similar mode of worshipping these Nāga-deities has been observed in the temples of Kishtwar like that of Bhaderwah. Nag temples are seen in good numbers in Kishtwar such as the temples dedicated to Mahalnag at Atholi or Aholi, the chief village of Padder area, Tushar Nag, Shesh Nag in both Bhaderwah and Kishtwar etc. According to the popular belief, Nāgas are considered to be the original inhabitants of Kishtwar, even before the coming of *Rishi Kashap* and some of them are said to have come along with him and settled in Kishtwar.²¹ Thus, the people of Kishtwar as well as their associate villages worshipped their nag-deities in order to seek their blessings.

19. Hutchison and Vogel, *History of Punjab Hill States*, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1933, p. 48.

20. Aseer Kishtwari, *Focus on J&K*, p. 934.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 933.

Fire dancing is said to be the most important ritual associated with Nāga-Cult and can be held in this region of Kishtwar. In this rite, a huge heap of charcoal and burning wood is prepared for the devotees and they all dance spiritually around this fire for the whole night in order to please their Nāg-deities.

Moreover, like that of Bhaderwah, Kishtwar also finds the relevance of Nāg-worship in water-bodies. Thus, spring or Nāga become abode of Snakes or Nāgas in this region. A large number of shrines have been built on the bank of these *baolies* and each shrine is dedicated to a particular deity. Prominent among them is Trisandhya, which flows only for a short period in a year. This shrine is situated in Dachhan-Marwah area. Next one is Gomai Nag in Nagseni, few kms. from Padder. In this shrine, local Hindus sacrifice goats there, for being protected from famine, heavy rain, storms and to fulfil their personal wishes. Other important springs in Kishtwar are – Human Nag, Hasel, Kundali, Gudarh etc.

Apart from the hilly regions of Jammu, the plains of Jammu are also equally devoted towards these Nāgas and some of them act as important centres of worship even today. Thus, the major regions popular in this regard are Kathua, Udhampur, Sudh-Mahadev, Akhnoor, Billawar etc.

In Kathua, an important shrine of Nāgas is known as Bawa Surgal. It is considered to be the home of snakes. Main feature of this shrine is that there are some stones bearing Nāga representations on them. Prayers are offered once in a week there. Also, annual *mela* takes place on *Rishi Panchmi* following the Nag Panchmi, which has been attended by the local people as well as people of surrounding areas.²² There is another shrine of Nag-devta at Kharsar village in Ramnagar town, called as Kharsar Devta. This shrine has been made in the memory of a snake who had got an accidental death. People out there offered prayers every Sunday to get a little water which is said to be effective in undoing the venom of snakes and scorpions. Also, according to local legends, people went there in order to get rid from troubles also.²³

Sumah Devta is an other important shrine, which is about 11 km. from the border town on Akhnoor-Sungal road and 37 kms. from proper Jammu region. Sumah Devta, was one of the sons of serpent king Vasuki and was gifted with divine powers. At the spot where he disappears stand a

22. Ganhar, J.N., *Jammu—Shrines and Pilgrimages*, Ganhar Publications, New Delhi, p. 76.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

cave temple and a small baoli. In this temple large number of idols has been put and then worshipped. An annual fair is held every year on the eve of *Chaitra Chandish*, is attended by thousands of people and dip in the baoli on that day is considered very useful.²⁴

Paap-Nashi Bāoli of Sudh Mahadev and Badi Baan of Chinani provided with various carved stones containing the relief of coiled serpents. People of the locality take bath in these water-bodies in order to wash away their sins and also offered prayers in these shrines after bathing.

One of the most important Nāga-Deity among Dogrās in Bhairh Devta. According to the popular myth, he was the son of the Great Vasuki Nāga. It is also said that he turned the direction of river Tawi towards Jammu so that the people of Jammu could quench their thirst as well as irrigate their fields. Thus, shrine of Bhairh Devta, in Jammu, is situated on the mount near river Tawi, 10 kms. from the city. Bhairh Devta is being worshipped by almost all the Dogra families but he served as the family deity of some clans and hence '*Mundan Ceremony*' is being performed here. He is also being worshipped in order to get blessings for materialistic purpose.²⁵

From the above survey of places associated with Nāga worship it becomes clear that Nāga-cult acquired prestigious position in almost all parts of Jammu region from an early period. This is move so in the hilly terrains of Jammu region where Nāga-cult predominates other religious cults. People in these areas would worship their respective Nāga-deities on regular basis and even on important festivals dedicated to them. Temples and shrines pertaining to these Nāgas have been built on the banks of water sources. Moreover, people of surrounding areas would also join them in order to fulfil their personal wishes.

Another important observation can be made when one compare the Nāga deities worshipped in the hills to the Nāga deities worshipped in the plains. In the hilly areas, worship of Nāga deities would be preferred by making the idols of nagas. The example of this in the form of Vasuki Nāga, who is worshipped in human form as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. This is also the case in other hilly regions like Kishtwar, Padder, etc.; where a large number of temples are dedicated to Vasuki Nāga and other minor Nag deities.

24. Sharma, S.K., *Antiquities, History, Culture and Shrines of Jammu*, pp. 89-92.

25. Jerath, Ashok, *Hindu Shrines of the Western Himalayan Jammu*, 2001, p. 161.

This is a clear reflection on how the local Nāga-cult gets assimilated into the Brahmanical pantheon and became an intricate part of Vashnavite tradition.

In the plains of Jammu region too, water-bodies especially—*Bāolis* have been given immense importance because all Nāga shrines are built on the banks of these bāolis. They also serve as natural source of drinking water to the surrounding society and hence, become means of expression. These baolies are associated with various sculptures which present fine artistic images of various deities which includes—Vishnu lying on Sheshnag, Shiva displaying serpent round his neck, motifs of coiled serpents, etc.

ASHOKA : AN EPITOME OF AN ETHICAL KING

Jatinder Kumar Jain*

Ethics and Politics to some seem to be two diametrically opposite poles, as Machevilli has said in his book *The Prince*: "Although a prince sometimes afford to be virtuous flattery, deceit and even murder are often necessary if the prince is to maintain himself in power." But Plato has maintained in his book *Republic* that a state ruled by Philosopher king, who himself is governed by reason and ethics is the best state. His disciple, Aristotle, who is recognized as father of Political Science suggests in his book *Nichomachean Ethics* that happiness (*Eudaemonia*) is the goal of life. For happiness one has to be virtuous which requires habituation, habituation requires law which requires politics.

In Indian thought, the institution of king is an ethical institution, who himself has to maintain high moral standard and be model to his subjects in matter of ethics. According to Buddha, Raja (King) is Ranjan (bring happiness) for his people. The king was considered as "The upholder of the sacred law".¹

In *Mahabharata* it is said the favourable natural phenomena are linked to ethical rule. "If king ruled according to Dharma, then the subjects would enjoy happiness and even the course of seasonal and natural phenomena (rain, good crops, the health of the people) which all depend upon the cosmic Dharma, would follow a normal and good course."² According to *Artha Shastra* "It is on the science of government that the course of progress of the world depends."³

Ashoka personifies all the virtues required in a ideal king. In the Buddhist sources, he was referred as *Chand Ashoka* (cruel Ashoka) before his transformation. But the enormity of violence during Kalinga war totally transformed him to Dhamma Ashoka (ethical Ashoka). The edict says: "Directly after the conquest of the Kalinga, the beloved of the gods became keen in the pursuit of Dharma, love of Dharma and inculcation of Dharma The chiefest conquest is not that by arms but by Dharma (Dharma-Vijaya)."⁴

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1. *Satpath Brahman*, V, IV, 4, 5.
2. *Mahabharat*, III, 207.
3. *Artha Shastra*, I, 4.
4. Rock Edicts, XIII.

Again it is said: "Instead of the reverberation of the war-drums (bheri-ghosha) is now to be heard the reverberation of religious proclamations (Dharma-ghosha)."⁵

But the conception of Dharma, according to Ashoka was not sectarian. According to Amulya Chandra Sen: "By Dharma as Ashoka repeatedly declared, he understood the energetic practice of sociomoral virtues of honesty, truthfulness, compassion, mercifulness, benevolence, non violence, considerate behaviour towards all "little sin and many good deeds", non extravagance, non acquisitiveness and non injury to animals. He spoke of no particular mode of religious creed or worship, nor of any philosophical doctrines. He spoke of Buddhism only to his coreligionists and not to others."⁶

Ashoka's universal view of religion is found full expression in Rock Edict XII. It is a master, piece of tolerance, dialogue philosophy. People of different sects are recommended to rise above their individual selfish interests and set in example of co-operation for the promotion of general welfare and Dharma. In Fleet's opinion Ashoka's Dharma is but a form of Raja Dharma consisting in the politico-moral principles. Vincent Smith opines that the principles promulgated by Ashoka are common to all religions without being identical with those of any one of them to which Mookerji coined 'universal religion'.⁷

Underlying the catholic spirit towards different sects, Amulya Chandër Sen maintains: "Towards all religious sects he adopted a policy of respect and guaranteed them full freedom to live according to their own principles, but he urged them to exert themselves for the "increase of their inner worthiness." He moreover, exhorted them to respect the creeds of others, praise the good points of others and refrain from vehement adverse criticism of the view point of others".⁸

Ashoka's definition of social ethics is based on a respect for all religious teachers and on a harmonious relationship between parents and children, teachers and pupils and employers and employees. It was the 12th years of his reign that Ashoka began to issue his edicts, in which he referred to policies, concerns and administrative changes, and his aspirations of instituting a new social ethics.⁹

Ashoka's edicts are in the nature of official pronouncements of policy and instructions to his officers and subjects.¹⁰ His Dharma is not any sectarian Dharma

5. R.E., IV.

6. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

7. Barua, Beni Madhav : *Ashoka And His Inscriptions* (Calcutta : New Age Publishers Ltd., 1955), p.225.

8. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

9. Pillor Edict, VI

10. Basham, A.L., *The Wonder That was India* (London : Sidgwick and Jackson, 1954), p.53.

but is social ethics which is essence of ethics of different sects.¹¹ It is "What is proper for good men to do and what is improper for them not to do".¹² It is:

- I. Obedience to
 - i) Father and mother¹³
 - ii) Elders¹⁴
 - iii) Teachers¹⁵
 - II. Respect towards gurus¹⁶
 - III. Proper treatment towards
 - i) Ascetics without sectarian consideration¹⁷
 - ii) Relations¹⁸
 - iii) Servants and dependants¹⁹
 - iv) The poor and miserable²⁰
 - v) Friends, acquaintances and companions²¹
 - IV. Charities towards
 - i) Ascetics²²
 - ii) Friends, comrades and relatives²³
 - iii) Aged²⁴
 - V. Abstention from slaughter of living beings,²⁵ restraint of violence towards living beings,²⁶ non-violence towards life.²⁷
- Ashoka had emphasized practical ethics or moral duties for his subjects in different edicts comprising the following virtues is:
- i) Kindness²⁸

11. R.E. XII.

12. Barua, Beni Madhav, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

13. R.E. III, IV.

14. R.E., IV.

15. P.E. VII.

16. R.E. IX.

17. R.E. IV.

18. R.E. IV.

19. P.E. VII.

20. P.E. VII.

21. R.E. XIII.

22. R.E. III.

23. R.E. III.

24. R.E. VIII.

25. R.E. III.

26. R.E. IX.

27. R.E. IV.

28. P.E. VII.

- ii) Charities²⁹
- iii) Truthfulness³⁰
- iv) Inner and other purity³¹
- v) Gentleness³²
- vi) Saintliness³³
- vii) Moderation in spending and saving³⁴
- viii) Self-control³⁵
- ix) Purity of heart³⁶
- x) Gratitude³⁷
- xi) Firm devotion³⁸
- xii) Attachment to morality³⁹

In R.E. XIII, the ethics is described in a nutshell as the right attitude towards all. It is:

- i) Non-violence
- ii) Restraint
- iii) Equal treatment
- iv) Mildness in respect of all creatures, human beings, as well as beasts and birds.

He gave priority to *ahimsa*, that is 'non-violence' to human beings and animals and abstention from war. He forbade slaughtering of animals for sacrifices and food and prohibited his court hunting expeditions and eating meat. He laid stress on the necessity of treating all living beings especially the weak, the old and foreigners.⁴⁰ Welfare of his subjects was to live in the building of an extensive network of roads lined with shade-giving trees and provided with wells and rest houses at regular intervals. He gave importance to ecology and public service in order to avoid unnecessary suffering to men and animals.

"On the roads too banyan trees have been planted by me to give shade to

29. R.E. VII.

30. P.E. VII.

31. P.E. VII.

32. R.E. XIII.

33. P.E. VII.

34. R.E. III.

35. R.E. VII.

36. R.E. VII.

37. R.E. VII.

38. R.E. XIII.

39. R.E. XIII.

40. R.E. IV.

man and beast, mango-gardens have been planted and wells dug at every half-kos; rest houses too, have been erected and numerous watering –places were made here and there for the comfort of man and beast”.⁴¹

He abandoned:

- i) Killing of animals for sacrifices in the capital.⁴²
- ii) Animal fights for amusement, consumption of meat during feasting.⁴³
- iii) Slaughter of animals for the royal table (restricted to two peacocks and one antelope rarely used).⁴⁴
- iv) Royal tours of pleasure accompanied by hunting.⁴⁵
- v) War⁴⁶ and conquest.⁴⁷

He made provision of public utility works,⁴⁸ viz:

- i) Hospitals for men and beasts.
- ii) Cultivation of medicinal plants.
- iii) Digging of wells on the roads and plantation of trees for shade for the comfort of travelers and animals. The existence of such hospitals is corroborated by Chinese pilgrim.⁴⁹

To practice the Dharma activity Ashoka went out on periodic-tours preaching the Dharma to the rural people and relieving their sufferings, he ordered his high officers to do the same, in addition to attending to their normal duties, he exhorted administrative officers to be constantly aware of joys and sorrows of the common folk and to be prompt and impartial in dispensing justice.

A special class of high officers, designated Dharma Mahamatras was appointed to foster Dharma work by the public, relieve suffering wherever found and look to the special needs of women of people inhabiting outlying regions of neighbouring people, and of various religious communities.⁵⁰ It was ordered that matters concerning public welfare were to be reported to him at all times.

“At all hours, while I am eating or in queen’s apartment or even in the ranches or at Dharma discourses or in the parks everywhere reporters are posted

41. R.E. VII.

42. R.E. I.

43. R.E. I.

44. R.E. I.

45. R.E. VIII.

46. R.E. IV.

47. R.E. XIII.

48. R.E. II.

49. Fa Hien, *Travels*, ch. xxvii, quoted by Smith, Vincent A., *Ashoka The Buddhist Emperor of India* (New Delhi : S. Chand & Co., 1970), p.66.

50. R.E. V.

with orders to report on the affairs of my people. In all places do I dispose off the affair of the people.”⁵¹

Pillar Edict VII gives further information on the functions of the Dharma-Mahamatras as indicated in the other edicts. “Dignitaries of piety were appointed by me in charge of manifold indulgences, these both for ascetics and for householders, also over all sects were they appointed—over the samgha, Brahmins, Ajivikas and Nirgranthas. Vincent A. Smith mentions Dharma mahamatras exclusively engaged in the enforcement of the edicts concerning ethics as censors.”⁵²

These Dharma-mahamatras were appointed to spread Dharma, mitigate the wrongs or rigours of justice, administer the charities of the king and royal family, supervise the morals of their harems, and superintend the affairs conducted by the committees or councils governing different sects, Buddhist, Jain Ajivika and others.

Rajukas or talukes were high officers placed in charge of districts with the role of bringing happiness and welfare in the country-side, of defending people. Who unjustly harassed and to free the people who were in jail without committing a crime.⁵³ They should also instruct the prisoners on Dharma.⁵⁴ Apart from this, other jail reforms instituted were:

- i) The judicial reforms granting reprieve of three days to convicts sentenced to death.⁵⁵
- ii) institution of jail-deliveries on the anniversaries of the emperor’s coronation.⁵⁶

As children, all the officers are given full and independent authority therefore they should keep a relation of love with the monarch and use their authority for the welfare of all, who are also the monarch’s children.⁵⁷

According to Amulya Chandra Sen: “The only glory he sought, he said was for having led his people along the path of Dharma. No doubts are left in the minds of readers of his inscriptions regarding his earnest zeal in serving his subjects. More success was attained in his work, he says, by reasoning with people than by using commands.”⁵⁸

51. R.E. VI.

52. Smith, Vincent A., *op. cit.*, p.53.

53. P.E. V.

54. R.E.V.

55. P.E. IV.

56. P.E. V.

57. Sarnath Rock Edict, I.

58. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Forgiveness has been given great prominence in his policy: "Even if any one does positive harm to him he would be considered worthy of forgiveness by his sacred majesty so far as he can possibly be forgiven".⁵⁹ His message in respect of the unsubdued borderers was "that the king desires that they should have no fear of me that they should trust me and should receive from me happiness, not sorrow".⁶⁰

Ashoka had a universal and international mind. He maintained good relation with all the neighbouring states by diplomatic efforts. He had a strong belief in the principle of co-existence since he believed that a sovereign state has the right to exist because this is the Dharma order of things.⁶¹

The general policy of his empire was that "the chiefest conquest is the conquest of the right and not might".⁶²

An organization of missionary work in foreign countries was set up which were objects not of his political or military but religious conquests (Dharma-Vijaya) achieved by his missionaries.⁶³

A Simple quotation that illustrates the spirit that guided Ashoka is: "All men are my children. As for my own children I desire that they may be provided with all the welfare and happiness of this world and of the next, so do I desire for all men as well".⁶⁴

According to Vincent A. Smith: There can be little doubt that on the whole Buddhism produced a valuable and permanent improvement in Indian notions of morality and that its beneficent action was largely promoted by Ashoka's official propaganda.⁶⁵

On the whole Ashoka's policy of social ethics had a positive impact on the morality of the common people. Vincent A. Smith has quoted Miss Noble: "A man has a right to hold his own belief, but never to force it upon another" is the dictum that has made India a perfect university of religious culture including every stage of thought and practice".⁶⁶ Again Arraian who lived in 150 B.C. wrote that "no Indian was ever known to tell an untruth". Strabo an Asiatic Greek wrote in 27 B.C. that "Indians are so honest as neither to require locks to their doors nor

59. R.E. XIII.

60. Kalinga Edict II.

61. R.E. XIII.

62. R.E. XIII.

63. R.E. XIII.

64. R.E. XIII.

65. Smith, Vincent A., *op. cit.*, p.67.

66. Miss. Noble, *The Web of Indian Life*, quoted by Smith Vincent A., *op. cit.*, p. 63.

writings to bind their agreements". Khang Thai in 231 A.D. wrote that "the Indians are straight forwards and honest".

Huentsang in 7th century said, that "Indians will not take anything wrongfully and they yield more than fairness requires. They do not practice deceit and keep their sworn obligation". Max Muller, the German Ideologist of 19th Century said that "it was love of truth that struck all the people who came in contact with India".

Prof. A.L. Basham says, "In no other part of the ancient world were the relations of man and man and of man and the state, so fair and human. In no other early civilization were slaves so few in number and their rights so well protected as in the Kingdom of Ashoka."⁶⁷

67. Basham, A.L., *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

STUDIES IN ROYAL OWNERSHIP OF LAND IN EARLY INDIA

(From the Harappan Period to the Vedic Age)

Dinesh Kumar Gupta* & Neeraj Kumar**

Various theories have been propounded for and against royal and state ownership of land in early India and the issue is still wide open before the Indologists.

V.A. Smith observed that "the native law of India has always recognized agricultural land as being crown property."¹ Following him J.N. Samaddar expressed the view that the soil was the property of the king.² Others who acquiesced with this view are B. Breloer,³ R. Shamasastri,⁴ Hopkins,⁵ and Buhler.⁶ M.A. Buch⁷ suggests that the king was the universal landlord. M.H. Gopal holds that the basis of land system in early India was a sort of tenancy under the crown.⁸ R.C. Basak⁹ also favours royal ownership and so does G.L. Adhya.¹⁰ Romila Thapar¹¹ refers to a gradual change whereby kings did not own land at first but became later the sole owners of land. Spellman¹² emphasises that king's lordship of the earth was more symbolic. W.Rau¹³ finds legal land lordship on the part of the king as early as the age of the *Brāhmaṇa* texts. More recently R.S. Sharma concludes that the king is the greatest landowner.¹⁴

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1. V.A. Smith, *Early History of India*, Oxford, 1904, p. 123.
2. J.N. Samaddar, *Economic Condition in Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1922, p. 168.
3. See U.N. Ghoshal, *Hindu Revenue System*, pp. 225-226.
4. *Kautilya's Arthaśāstrā*, (tr.) R. Shamasastri, Mysore, 1919, p. 144.
5. E.W. Hopkins, *India, Old and New*, London, 1902, p. 223.
6. *SBE*, xxv, p. 259; note on Manu, viii, 39.
7. M.A. Buch, *Economic Life in Ancient India*, Baroda, 1924, Vol. I.
8. M.H. Gopal, *Mauryan Public Finance*, London, 1935, p. 62.
9. R.C. Basak, *ASJMV*, Vol. 3-2, pp. 486-487.
10. G.L. Adhya, *Early Indian Economics*, Bombay, 1966, pp. 29-30.
11. Romila Thapar, *Asoka and the Decline of the Mauryas*, Oxford, 1964, p. 65.
12. J.W. Spellman, *Political Theory of Ancient India*, Oxford, 1964, pp. 203-210.
13. W. Rau, See, *Truth, Myth and Politics in Ancient India*, p. 88.
14. R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, Calcutta, 1965, pp. 135-165.

In ancient times, the rights that a king had over the land in his kingdom cannot be defined in straight-forward way. The practice of granting land implies some idea of ownership but the rights of revenue do not. Ownership must have free use and disposal of agricultural land through sale, mortgage, partition, lease etc. Most of the views expressed by scholars are consistent with the fact that the king had direct ownership or enjoyment (*Bhoga*) of some land and claimed lordship (*Svamyā*) over all. Lordship was legally attributed to the king because of his function which enabled him to a share of the produce of the land. His claim to be lord (*Adhipati*) of the land was similar to of the *Brāhmaṇas* who claimed to be *Adhipatis* of everything.¹⁵

The problem of cultivation did not arise at the dawn of history when the population was negligible and the people depended for subsistence on a number of objects besides land. With the progress of civilization and the growth of population, pressure on land started mounting and thus cultivation came into vogue.

The roots of landed property can be traced to the Indus civilization. But nothing can be asserted with certainty because of the limitations of archaeological evidences and non-decipherment of the Indus script. Wheeler calls it a bourgeois democratic civilization.¹⁶ The arrangement for irrigation, sewerage and drainage was efficient. The Indus people were divided into classes. The big granaries discovered at Harappa and Mohenjodaro suggest that grains were stored but the purpose of such storage is not clear. The Indus people had enough surplus and the group, controlling the production, had a secure grip on the expropriated surplus.¹⁷

It is very difficult in the present state of our knowledge to say as to who owned the land in the Indus valley. The possibility of the whole land being the property of and directly administered by the great temple or its priesthood can not be precluded. It is evident that the food surplus was yielded up by the primary producers and that surplus was taken away by those who did not actually share the burden of production but simply directed and controlled operations. The enormous granaries were too large to be in private possession. As they are accompanied by small tenement houses meant for special class of workers or slaves who worked for pounding or storing grains, it appears that the ownership of the means of production of course lay with the state, whosoever might have wielded the

15. Mabett, *Truth, Myth and Politics in Ancient India*, p. 89.

16. M. Wheeler, *The Indus Civilization*, Cambridge, 1953.

17. D.D. Kosambi, *An Introduction to the Study of Indian History*, Bombay, 1956. p. 71.

authority.¹⁸ The granaries took care of processing and distribution of the surplus which kept the civilization going.

Moreover, the rigid similarity in the town planning of Mohenjodaro and Harappa, quite distant from each other and the apparent uniformity of weights and measures, the common script, the uniformity of the seals and evidence of extensive trade throughout the whole Harappan cultural zone imply some sort of a centralized authority,¹⁹ which exercised an autocratic control over the whole area as is obvious from the use of organized labour for the storage of grain.²⁰ It is not clear whether the ruling class consisted of a secular king or a priest king or a merchant, oligarchy but when D.D. Kosambi refers to an elaborate unchanging "magical ritual" reinforcing the autocratic control, he definitely indicates the existence of priest kings.²¹ At the same time, it is possible that the cultivating the later *dasyus* or *dasa* of the *Rg Veda*.

There is nothing specific about the division of land or landownership²² in the early Vedic period. The *Rg Veda* does not contain evidence of the sale, transfer, lease, mortgage, or gift of land. Perhaps private ownership of land had not become effective during this period.²³ It must be borne out in the mind that in the early Vedic period, no land could be alienated without the consent of the *Viś*.²⁴

The later Vedic period witnessed extensive use of burning as well as iron-axes for cutting forests to pave the way for agriculture.²⁵ Settlements were not permanently fixed²⁶ and a variety of crops were being produced.²⁷

18. *JBRs*, Patna, Vol. I, iii, p. 28.

19. Bridget and Raymond Allchin, *The Birth of Indian Civilization*, 1968, p. 129.

20. cf. S. Piggot, *Pre-Historic India*, London, 1950, pp. 153-155.

21. D.D. Kosambi, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 83.

23. R.S. Sharma, *Light on Early Indian Society and Economy*, Bombay, 1970, p. 56.

24. *JBRs*, Patna, Vol. I, iii, p. 29.

25. The beginnings of iron-age in India has not yet been unanimously fixed. D.D. Kosambi fixes the date 800-700 B.C. on the basis of literary evidence ("*The Beginning of the Iron Age in India*", *JESHO*, Vol. 6, No.3, p. 314). But iron weapons have been discovered widely from 900 B.C. though upto 500 B.C. iron finds contain very few iron tools. cf. R.S. Sharma, "*Class Formation and its Material Basis in the Upper Gangetic Basin*" (c. 1000-500 B.C.), *IHR.*, Vol. II, No. 1.

26. Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Bombay, 1963, p. 269. He thinks that settlements were not permanently fixed.

27. N.C. Bandopadhyaya, *Economic Life and Progress in Ancient India*, Allahabad, 1985, p. 30.

The growing importance of agriculture and other changes in the economic life destroyed the old concept of landed property. With the growth of royal pretensions and authority the king assumed control of land.²⁸ Hitherto the king distributed only the spoils of war mainly cattle and women slaves among the priests. Later he claimed to grant a part of the land with the consent of the clan.²⁹ Fields are for the first time counted as an index of wealth³⁰ showing that large landed possessions became possible.

Royal ownership found a suitable climate when a number of tribal states melted away in territorial states. The small and almost non-descript Vedic king jockeying for a dominant position in the area waged wars upon his neighbours under the pretexts of rituals such as *Aśvamedha* and *Vājapeya*. Accounts of the horse sacrifices in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the description of the royal consecration in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* are an interesting commentary on the urge of the Vedic king to expand his dominion or at least to enlarge the area of influence.

By and by royal prerogative over land came to be established. Charitable gifts of land are as old as Vedic period.³¹ Gifts were made as an act of merit and *Bhumidhana* came to be considered sacred in the later Vedic period. Among the retainers of the king there is also a state officer to collect this share i.e., *Bhagadugha* or "the milcher of the share." It was natural that the status of the landowners under such a king was reduced almost to that of the tenants.³²

In the beginning the ruler's claim seems to have been over a 16th of the produce of land; and he also aspired to an undefined share in villages, in horses, in king." Afterwards he levied a tax *Balī* of an undefined nature, from the *Vaisyas* or peasants.³³ Furthermore, he began to grant authority over lands and villages to his lesser chiefs (*Ksatriyas*).³⁴ Finally we see him giving away lands and villages to *Brāhmaṇas*.³⁵ Such grants were apparently first made with the consent of the *Viś* or the peasant community,³⁶ but in the course of time the grants tended to become arbitrary acts of the king

28. *JBS.*, Patna, p. 30.

29. *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, vii, 1.1.4.

30. D.R. Chanana, *Slavery in Ancient India*, Delhi, 1960, p. 21.

31. *RgVeda*, I. 125 vi. 61-10; vi. 47-21 25' vii. 18-22-25.

32. *Atariya Brāhmaṇa*, Xxix 6; *Anusasana-parva*, 62-39.

33. Ghoshal, *Revenue System*, pp. 6-8.

34. S.K. Das, *Economic History of Ancient India*, 1924, p. 85.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89; D.D. Kosambi, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

36. S.K. Das, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

and as such appear to have aroused some protest.³⁷

Land grant is referred to in the *Upanishada*.³⁸ Evidences can be multiplied in support of the fact that by the time of the *Upanishadas* royal ownership had come to be accepted. Such grants with accompanying privileges created a special class of beneficiary as a result of which the real cultivators were turned into tenants.³⁹ The peasants the *Viś* or *Vaiśyas* became increasingly subject to the exactions and oppressions of a superior class. Now the *Vaiśyas* came to be considered as "tributary (paying *Bali*) to another, eaten by another and oppressed at will."⁴⁰ A kind of embryonic village (*Gramā*) overlord appears or the save who keeps the folk dependent upon him.⁴¹ Another superior non-peasant right on land developed in the form of village and fields held by the priests and *Brāhmaṇas*, whatever the nature of ownership a formal sanction from the king was essential because king as the overlord needed Surplus to maintain his authority.⁴²

Originally the king's title to ownership of all land was identified with the communal title, he being the communal head or lord of the *Viś*. With the advance of royal power and bifurcation of communal and royal jurisdiction he emerged as the third factor in the land system and developed certain prerogatives over the soil as reflected in the *Brāhmaṇas*. In the *Sātapatha Brāhmaṇa* it is said that to whomsoever a *Ksatriya* with the approval of the people or clan grants a settlement, that is properly given.⁴³ It is true that gift of land with tribal consent was customary law but it was sometimes arbitrarily disposed of by the ruler thus generating a tendency to reduce public lands to king's private estates.⁴⁴

It is important however to note that the *Sabha* and the *Samiti* must have constrained royal authority as far as the control of land was concerned. The tribesmen who met in the assembly exercised control over

37. Ghoshal, *Agrarian System*, p. 5.

38. Chand, *Upn.* iv, 2-4-5 records the gift of a number of villages to a *Brahmand*, Raikava, by king *Janasruti*. The *Smritie* are replete with such gifts.

39. R.K. Mukherji, *Indian Land System*, Vide Report of Land Revenue Commission, Vol. II, p. 132.

40. R.S. Sharma, *Sūdras*, p. 59.

41. D.D. Kosambi, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-101, 125-126.

42. Choudhary, *JBRs.*, p. 31.

43. *Sātapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 1.1.8; 1.73.4.

44. A.N. Bose, *Social Rural Economy of Northern India* (c. 600 B.C.-200 A.D.), Vol.II, Calcutta, 1942-45.

the public land.⁴⁵ A reference in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*⁴⁶ clearly points to the right of control possessed by the popular assembly. We are told that the *Ksatriya* can grant a settlement to any body with the consent of the clan.⁴⁷ This implies the existence of separate holding under the general control of the ruling tribe at the head of which stood the king.⁴⁸

Thus the king had direct ownership of the royal domains which also included fallow and arable lands and had indirect rights on the private lands and collected revenue in return for the sacred duty of the protection. Lordship was legally attributed to the king because of his divine and sovereign status. In the lands which were granted the grantees were assigned various revenues of the territory but the king kept his judicial and other authority over it. In the lands ruled over by the feudatories, the feudal lords similarly collected the revenue and passed on a certain amount as tribute depending on the power their overlord enjoyed.

45. R.S. Sharma, *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions*, Delhi, 1959, p. 105.

46. *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VII, 1.1.4.

47. *Ibid.*

48. R.S. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

Presidential Address
(Medieval Section)

MEDIEVAL PUNJAB : A RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE
"GURU NANAK AND INDIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS"

*Professor Madanjit Kaur**

Friends, fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to begin by expressing my deep sense of gratitude and sincere thanks to the Vice-Chancellor and Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala for selecting me to present presidential address of the Medieval Section of the current session of the Punjab History Conference. I am happy to feel that I have been considered worthy of the great honour and that too after my retirement. May be, the choice of the organizers of the Conference has been directed by the consideration, that, I have long association with the Departments of History and Punjab Historical Studies of the Punjabi University, Patiala. At the behest of late Dr. Ganda Singh, the doyen of Punjab History, I first visited your University in 1966 in connection with my Ph.D. work, for which I had been registered as a departmental research fellow in the Department of History, University of Allahabad. My guide, late Prof. O.P. Bhatnagar had been a friend and admirer of late Dr. Ganda Singh. I was instructed by my guide to select the area of research in consultation with Dr. Ganda Singh, whose scholarship and deep insight into the problems and scope of research in the History of the Medieval Punjab was well recognized and appreciated at the platform of the august body of the Indian History Congress. I owe a great sense of gratitude to the Department of Punjab Historical Studies for providing me every help in completing my Ph.D. thesis for which I had to visit your University frequently for a number of years. My association with the Department of Punjab Historical Studies further deepened when I joined Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University in 1973. In my career of thirty years span at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar,

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I have concentrated mainly on the History of Punjab with specific reference to the socio-cultural aspects of the Sikh History. Therefore, I have concentrated my address concerning Punjab History in Medieval period with religious perspective in its historical development.

I accept the honour of presenting this address with a sense of humility and conviction that you will bear with me if I do not place before you a scholarly expertise as presented by my predecessors on this chair.

Guru Nanak and Indian Religious Traditions

The origin of a religion has to be studied in the background of socio-political conditions of the society. The period in which Guru Nanak was born (1469 AD) is an important period in the history of mankind from various points of view. It was the period in which the foundations of the modern world were laid. The renaissance had brought tremendous awakening in Europe, regarding Culture, Science, Philosophy and explorations. It was an era of conflicts between science and religion; logic and faith and clashes between church and states for political power. But the scenario was different in East. There were clashes between invaders and natives for land and power and conflicts between religions and cults of the natives and new religions brought by the alien rulers. The period is marked by stress and suffering in Indian History. Wars and invasions were frequent. There was a conflict between the people of this country and the new comers from Central Asia. The local powers were gradually transformed into a central authority. However, fissiparous tendencies could not be eliminated in a country, having a fragmented society segregated on the lines of religions, sects, castes, languages and sub-cultures.

The milieu in which Guru Nanak lived (1469-1539 AD) presented a deplorable picture. Some of his hymns are personal record of the socio-political conditions of his times. The perception of historical reality of the period, its challenge and aspirations were transformed into a positive, discerning vision as expressed in his *bani* (hymns).

During this period the Lodhis ruled over the Delhi Sultanat. Punjab was an important part of the Delhi Sultanat. But Sultan Sikander Lodhi (1489-1517) could not effectively control the provincial administrators. His successor, Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi was defeated by Babur in 1526 in the battle of Panipat. Henceforth, Punjab passed under the rule of the Mughals, invaders from Central Asia. Guru Nanak was a witness to Babur's raids on Saidpur (The Modern Ennabad, now in Pakistan). Babur's invasion proved to be scourge for Punjab. Guru Nanak had described the plight of the

victims in his hymns.¹

A historical interpretation of Guru Nanak's *bani* must embrace both his 'theology' and his 'response' not each by itself but the two together in their inter-related oneness. In the *bani* of Guru Nanak the reality of the world is socially constituted and the social construction of reality is underpinned by religion to give it a supramundane sanction. Guru Nanak looks upon the contemporary world as 'disintegrated and delegitimized' and called upon men to fall back on their own 'inner resources' to build a future.

Guru Nanak vitalized decaying centre of human consciousness with his devotional songs (*bani*) and emancipated the mind of the masses who were direly oppressed by empty creeds. It is believed that, Guru Nanak set out on long and arduous missionary journeys (*udasis*) to preach his message.²

With his experience and background Guru Nanak expounded his doctrines for the moral and spiritual uplift of mankind. After Lord Buddha, it was Guru Nanak who for the first time championed the cause of the masses in a caste ridden India. Socially and psychologically the message of Guru Nanak proved most congenial to the peasantry, and the lower strata of the society. It gave them personal and corporate spiritual satisfaction without isolating them from the society. It commended and made sacred the societal role which they were already playing.

The devotional compositions of Guru Nanak are motivated by an earnest desire to communicate his message to a particular audience. Through his hymns we discover a person who was deeply concerned with the social problems of his times and was genuinely interested in finding solutions to the evils of his age.³

Guru Nanak was very sensitive to the spiritual make up of the people he was addressing. His response to his milieu was bold, humanitarian and unique. It is evident from his hymns that the pangs of existence in his times touched his compassionate heart to make him deeply concerned with the sufferings of his fellow beings.⁴ His intense feeling about his age is

1. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, pp. 360, 417-418 & 722.

Babur's memoirs *Babarnama* records the incident as, "...advanced to Sialkot, the inhabitants of which submitted and saved their possessions, but the inhabitants of Saidpur, who resisted were put to death (sword), their wives and children taken into custody and all their property plundered."

2. Bhai Gurdas, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, Var I, Pauri 24.

3. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 145.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

characterized by the disintegrating effect of the Turkish rule, political chaos, oppression and corruption at all levels of administration, decline in religious beliefs and values.⁵ Guru nanak's denunciation of the ruling classes and the elite, who lived off the society without being able to perform its responsibilities, is especially significant.⁶

In the *Bani* of Guru Nanak there are frequent references to administrative corruption, which has been looked upon by the Guru as a natural corollary of the disintegrated society in which knowledge, virtue and spirit have shrunk to nothingness.

At the cultural front the Guru had to contend not only with the rising forces of Islam, an alien faith, with its internal animosities between sects but also to confront with powerful currents in the Hindu religious thought viz., Advaitism, Vaisnavism and the Nath Yogic cults. Bhai Gurdas expounds bitterly on the factional conflict between various Hindu and Muslim sects. In his opinion this intergroup hostility was creating chaos and disintegration in the society.⁷

The mutual confrontation of the two vital but in several ways contradictory culture-forms, represented by Hinduism and Islam was the axial point of the contemporary crisis. The environment had possibilities for both creative synthesis and rejective hostility. The creative impulse of the times met its fullest expression in Guru Nanak and received from him a definite stamp and direction.

The fact that Guru Nanak was able to adopt his theological and religious idiom to suit the religious consciousness of the Indian people drawing on the ideas, mythology and dialogues of the *Puranas*, Nath cult, Vaisnav *Bhakti*, Sant *Parampara* and Yogic traditions, the practices of mysticism and the Indian version of Islam enjoins us to make further investigation into the original thought of Guru Nanak and universalism of his teachings.

We have at our disposal large number of literary works on Guru Nanak but most of them are the theological interpretations in nature and content. Only a few attempts have been made to interpret Guru Nanak's contribution from historical, metaphysical, socio-cultural dimension in a holistic manner.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 468-469.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 1288.

7. Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, Pauri 21.

Till recently, Guru Nanak has not been considered a systematic theologian by western scholars. 'Even the accusation of inconsistency in thought has been levelled against him.'⁸ But the reality is that Guru Nanak had produced a coherent pattern of religious thought which is followed to this day by his followers.

It is to be pointed out that western historians have not been able to evaluate the original contribution of Guru Nanak to theology. For example in the words of Toynbee, the 'religion Guru Nanak originated was just a concordance of Hinduism with Islam.'⁹ If Sikhism represents an amalgamation of material selected from different sources, it means that it is nothing more than a juxtaposition of doctrines, randomly selected from various religious traditions. Such views also claim that Sikhism is not an original religion, it is elective in its contents. Such stereotyped views are straight forwardly rejected by students of Comparative Religion, well acquainted with the essence of Indian religious traditions and the origin and development of Sikhism. The Sikh scripture *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* confirms Guru Nanak's status as the messenger of God and a prophet.

Archer was the first European scholar to recognize the distinct identity of Guru Nanak's theology. Guru Nanak's concept of *bhakti* as a means of salvation has been interpreted by Archer as 'a fourth way of salvation' in the context of three *bhakti* traditions in vogue in the times of the Guru.¹⁰

Recently, a number of scholarly works on Guru Nanak and his teachings have been produced by Indian and Western scholars. A scholarly attempt has been made by McLeod to understand Guru Nanak's beliefs and to set out in a systematic form the theology of Guru Nanak. A historian's approach has been applied by J.S. Grewal to present Guru Nanak in a historical perspective.¹¹ Besides, a number of commemorative volumes produced by various agencies and Guru Nanak Foundation on the occasion of the Quincentenary Celebrations of Guru Nanak's Birth Day in 1969, have added a rich literature on the life and works of the great Guru. Daljit Singh's *Sikhism : A Comparative Study of Its Theology and Mysticism* (1979) and *The Sikh Ideology* (1984) and Jagjit Singh's *The Sikh Revolution*, Surjit

8. J.N. Farquhar, *An Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, 1920, p. 337.

9. Arnold Toynbee, *Historians' Approach to Religion*, London, p. 110.

10. J.C. Archer, *The Sikhs in relations to Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Ahmadyas : A Study in Comparative Religion*, 1946, p. 133.

11. *Guru Nanak in History*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1969.

Hans's *Historical Analysis of Sikh Literature* (A.D. 1500-1850) and Kharak Singh's *Guru Nanak : A Prophet with Difference* (2007) deserve to be mentioned here for a better understanding of Guru Nanak's teachings in Indian religious context. Nevertheless, much work still waits to be done and there are many points which remain to be investigated such as the religious ideas of Guru Nanak, the form in which he expressed his mystical experience, the nature of his prophetic claim, the formation of his religious philosophy, openness of his teachings towards other religions, transmission of his message and the cultural impact of his teachings on Indian civilization.

Guru Nanak was a contemporary of Martin Luther (1483-1546), the progenitor of Protestant Movement in Europe and a great religious reformist of his times. Similarly, in the East the advent of Guru Nanak Dev is one of the most important landmark in the development of religious traditions in Indian History. The available contemporary and near contemporary sources on the life of Guru Nanak, however do not adequately address the intellectual curiosity and inquiry of the modern scholars and historians as academic exercise. The only sources of information on the life of Guru Nanak are the *Janamsakhi* traditions (life stories or traditional biographies of Guru Nanak) written during 17th, 18th and 19th centuries in Gurmukhi Script. The *Janamsakhi* literature is a peculiar form of genre both in form and contents and difficult to comprehend and decipher. The contents of mythological accounts of *Janamsakhis*, narrating miracles stressing on traditional rituals and glorification of spiritual power of Guru Nanak interwoven in complexity of temporal themes and spiritual exigencies transmuted in metaphors, similes and symbols repel the modern scholars. But morally sound value system presented in Guru Nanak *bani* (hymns) with logical comments on the contemporary Indian society and political set-up distinguish sharply Guru Nanak and his thought from other religious traditions and need to be highlighted.

Unlike other prophets, Guru Nanak has himself recorded his teachings in his *bani* which is incorporated in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the Holy book of the Sikhs. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is considered the most authentic medieval Indian Religious Text. The contents of this holy book have been compiled and edited by Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606) the fifth Guru of the Sikhs (in AD 1604) in a set pattern with numerals so that no interpolation could be made in the original codification. In his numerous hymns Guru Nanak had explained the contemporary socio-political and

religious philosophy and worldview unambiguously, leaving little scope for misinterpretation. Scholars with fair knowledge of Punjabi language and access to authentic translations and commentaries of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* have no difficulty in understanding the message of the text.

In the *bani* of Guru Nanak there is very little appreciation for any particular form of religious belief and practice, whether Hindu or Muslim, the conquering religion. The contemporary milieu was inflicted with the inter-religious conflicts between Hinduism and Islam and the sectarian fragmentation of the Indian society into various forms of dogmatism. The essence of religion and Divine knowledge was lost in both the communities. In the words of Guru Nanak :

*It was the dark night (amavas) of falsehood,
And the Moon of Truth was no where visible.*¹²

For common masses faith was centered in external authority and was expressed in conventional rituals and ceremonies. For the Hindu community religious authority rested in the Brahmin priests, for the Muslims, faith was anchored in the Ulemas, who interpreted religious and moral duties to them. The cultural and social context in which Guru nanak (A.D. 1469-1539) had to operate was predominantly Hindu. It is clearly evident from the hymns of Guru Nanak that he addressed to the Hindus who were ill-acquainted with the essence of their scriptures¹³ and that Hinduism had declined to meaningless rituals, customs and hypocritical beliefs.¹⁴ The Nath and Kanphata Yogis form another important sector of the audience of Guru Nanak.¹⁵ The Guru criticized them as hypocrites, who were a negative influence on the common man and the society in which they lived. However, positive appreciation is reserved for *nirgun bhakti*.

It is equally evident from the *bani* of Guru Nanak that Islam too as a religion was not fulfilling its obligatory social function. Guru Nanak confronted his Muslim audience through their own traditions. As in the case of Pandits of Hinduism, so the representatives of Islam i.e. the *qazis* and *mullahas* are criticized for their failure to live according to the requirements they may lay down for others.¹⁶ Addressing Muslim audience Guru Nanak sought to guide them along the same path of a universal morality that he

12. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p. 145.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 903.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 471-472.

15. *Ibid.*, pp. 938 and 467.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

indicated to the followers of Hinduism. His dispensations for the Muslims are contained particularly in "*Var Majh*".¹⁷ A close association of Guru Nanak's *bhakti* with the Sant tradition negates the hypothesis of a direct Muslim influence upon his ideals, as well as the notion of Sikhism as a deliberate attempt to produce synthesis of Hinduism and Islam. The Guru is not to be seen as synthesizer of faiths but as a holyman who reinterpreted his inheritance and made a significant contribution to the cultural heritage of India. Rising to a higher plane, he declared the apparent divergences of creed, particularly between Hinduism and Islam as two paths to be one :

*He who knows the two paths to be one,
shall alone find fulfillment.*¹⁸

Hinduism is not a unified and integrated religious system. It is a grouping together of cults and creeds that are at times quite at variance in their doctrines and fundamental concerns. Religions of Vedic origin are iconographic, introspective and mystical. By this test Sikhism, being a non-idolatrous, prophetic and revelatory religion essentially imbibes the characteristics that distinguish its independent identity. And thus by implication Sikhism is a non-Hindu religion.

Guru Nanak is an uncompromising monotheist. His idea of monotheism is neither a continuation of heritage he received nor a complete break with it. It is a new concept. However, it finds expression in the given idiom of the time.

The central affirmation of the faith of Guru Nanak is that : God is One and God is acting as free agent (*Karta Purakh*) the creator of the cosmos¹⁹ of which man is only one part. God had fixed task for each and every one.²⁰ This theology had far reaching consequences. The consequences of the experience of Ultimate Reality as 'One' and 'self disclosing' was that Guru Nanak denounced as false all those forms of religious traditions which denied the unity of God, and the systems which encouraged man to observe rituals, austerities, penance and sufferings for the sake of salvation. Jainism for its rejection of belief in God as well as its neglect of social responsibilities was condemned outright.²¹ In fact the attitude of Guru Nanak towards the Jains highlights the social and theistic

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150 and 1248.

emphasis of his theology.

For the rejection of exterior forms and rituals but their affirmation of unity and mystical union with God, the Nath beliefs certainly exercised an influence. We find an extensive use of Nath terminology in the *bani* of Guru Nanak.²² Nevertheless, the Nath Yogis fared only little better than their contemporaries. Their inclination towards sectarian strife, withdrawal from life, dependency on public charity together with their belief that liberation could be achieved only by effort and suffering meant that Guru Nanak had to reject their path as a way of futility even though he regarded their description of the ultimate goal (mystical union with God) as valid. Guru Nanak explicitly rejected Nath methods and beliefs and his *bani* bears clear evidence of an open controversy with Nath Yogis, who presented a worldview of life-negation, no social responsibility and mysticism of rest.²³

An important aspect of the teachings of Guru Nanak is the examination and evaluation of the yogic system prevalent in contemporary India. Guru Nanak found the yogic cults very widespread and popular. In fact the yogic cult was a dominating influence on the spiritual life of the Hindu Society. The *bani* of Guru Nanak marks out a clear disapproval of the yogic practices and withdrawal from the world. The system of Guru Nanak presents a holistic approach for a healthy body and a healthy mind. It rejects negligence of physical needs and straining of mental faculties for acquiring occult powers. Like Kabir, he called attention to the fact that claiming miraculous power of yoga, they were following only world pursuit (*maya*). The putative spiritual attainment was truly achieved by *sahaj* and beneficent action.

I would like to mention here, that the application of yoga for physical fitness and effective remedies for eradication of diseases as preached by Baba Ramdev now; was known at that time or not, is not indicated by *gurbani* or any other contemporary medieval account. Perhaps, this aspect of the old wisdom of vedic period (Patanjali Yoga) was in oblivion during the critical period of political chaos and cultural decline in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Guru Nanak rejected *Paranyam* and *Hatha* and severely condemned Shaktism.²⁴ The yogic practices involving occult rites and miracles are

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 1290-91.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 730.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 1343.

rejected. Instead he commanded the centering of the spiritual life in beneficent action in society.

As the yoga was familiar to the masses, Guru Nanak has to make use of Yogic terminology in explaining his theology. The terms *Sahaj*, *Maharas*, *Maha-anand*, *Dasam Duar*, *Riddhi*, *Siddhi* and *Anhad Sabada*, are employed as symbols of ethico-spiritual attainments in his *bani* and do not imply any form of Yoga. The Nath Yogis follow the tradition of *Hath Yoga* in order to gain miraculous physical and psychical powers. In all Nath traditions there is an emphasis on the combination of male and female energies (Linga and Yoni) — Shiva and Shakti and Purusha and Prakarti etc. But there is no duality in the religious thought of Guru Nanak. God is the creator and Nature (Prakarti) is his creation.

Nathism and the faith of Nanak present opposite world-views. The fundamental difference is that Nathism rejects the world and life as *maya* and misery. But Sikhism accepts them as spiritually meaningful. In Nathism withdrawal from the world, asceticism, celibacy, the rejection and downgrading of women, renunciation, solitude, yogic methodology are essential. In Sikhism, God being attributive, virtuous participating in the world, accepting the house-holder's life and social responsibilities, respect for women and service of man in all spheres of life is necessary. There is hardly a meeting ground between the two systems.

The ideal life commended by Guru Nanak is that of the house-holder (*grihasthi*) engaged in beneficent activity, keeping his mind absorbed in contemplating and devotion. The synthesis of the spiritual and the secular is meant to reject the monastic or ascetic kind of life. The various brands of mendicancy in contemporary India such as Yogis, Bairagi, Avadhut, Siddha, are disapproved as their way of life is barren, cut off from the stream of humanity.

In *Siddha gosht* (dialogues with the Siddhas, the first interfaith discourse recorded in medieval Indian Religious Scripture), Guru Nanak has emphasized the void in the spiritual experience of the ascetics.²⁵ Further, *Siddha gosht* gives a detailed exposition of Guru Nanak's view on the prevalent forms of asceticism and mendicancy to bring out the barren, negative features of their practices which benefit no one in society. The conception of true detachment in the theology of Guru Nanak is not of one, who observes the outer symbols of an ascetic or mendicant order but of a

25. *Ibid.*, p. 951.

person who keeps his ego under restraint, one who sublimates his desires and seeks the truth.²⁶

It was the Sant tradition (*nirgun sampraday*) which provided the basis of Guru Nanak's thought. He uses their terminology and affirms their doctrines. However, there is an impact of Guru Nanak's originality upon the inheritance, he received. The *bhakti* path of *Sant Parampara* was not a simple way of attaining liberation but was involved in complex and difficult methods. Guru Nanak received the Sant synthesis but to expand and reinterpret these ideas in an integrated manner in his theology. This tells on his description of the nature of mystic experience (manner of divine communication with man) with concepts like *Shabad*, the *Nam*, the *Guru* and the *Hukum*.

Although one of the significant influence upon the thought of Guru Nanak has been *bhakti*, but the cults of Vaishnava *bhakti* and Shaiva *bhakti* did not escape his criticism. In fact the Vaishnav and Shaiva *bhakti* traditions are part of the general process of social-hang in which the four class system of Hindu society exists as inflexible and hierarchical institutional structure. Guru Nanak wanted for a more flexible multi-centered mode of social organization based more on voluntary association than on rigid social stratification. Moreover, religious systems that are ascetic or monastic have generally a harsh attitude towards women. Their world-view involves a virtual withdrawal from social life and they are never bothered about bringing any social change.

The fundamentals of the Vaishnav, Shaiva and even Krishan cults (i.e. acceptance of religious authority of the Vedic scripture, beliefs in *avtar*, *varan*, rituals etc.) were basically a part and parcel of the Brahminical tradition. In addition, they had faith in mystic potency of the *mantras* (sacred formulas) and their *bhakti* was essentially formal and ritualistic without its ever fructifying into efficacious deeds in the social field. Guru Nanak clearly denies the scriptural authority of Vedas²⁷ and is critical of the caste distinction and rejects the belief in *aytar*. The Guru said :

A hundred curses on the mouth who holds and declares that God incarnates.²⁸

26. *Ibid.*, p. 877.

27. *Ibid.*, pp. 1279-1280.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 1136.

Guru Nanak emphasised virtuous deeds to seek the grace of God. All deeds done must find retribution. From this law there is no escape.²⁹ According to Guru Nanak it is virtuous deeds that are the essence of spiritual life.

In response to the spiritual claims of the Vaishnav and Shaiva cults, Guru Nanak asserted that the Supreme Reality lay beyond the garbs and forms of sectarianism and sacred *mantras*. All formal rituals, customs, ceremonies, taboos and austerities are denigrated as they lead the self away from loving devotion (*bhakti*). The consequence of Hindu philosophy of *dvait* (duality), Guru Nanak saw as the worst of all evils.³⁰ From an acceptance of duality all other faults arose i.e., belief in polytheism, self sufficiency (*haumai*), transmigration, asceticism, indulgence in ritualism etc.

There is an obvious contrast between the Brahmanic *bhakti* traditions and Sikhism in all the essentials. While Sikhism is strictly theistic, the Hindu *bhakti* traditions are pantheistic. The world-view of the religion of Guru Nanak is life affirming and ethical but the one of the Brahmanic tradition involves a virtual withdrawal from the world. Besides, their basic difference lies in the value system prescribed by Guru Nanak. Instead of giving importance to pilgrimage, renunciation and meditation in seclusion the Guru laid emphasis on humanitarianism with its constituents of charity, compassion and forgiveness which are essential aspects of true religion.³¹

'Bhakti' (devotion) is the path above all commended by Guru Nanak for realization of the God. Learning and intellectual feats are discountenanced since they are source of disputation.³² Like *Gita* the essence of Guru Nanak *bhakti* lies in the quest for the divine humility, self dedication and complete self-surrender to the mercy and grace of the Supreme Being.³³ In the hymns of Guru Nanak the true *bhakti* is the path of dedication to high ideals. The devotee must be perfect in his devotion and engaged in holy beneficent action. Guru Nanak said :

Without performing meritorious deeds no bhakti can be attained.³⁴

29. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 930.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 505-506.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

The path commended by the Guru harmoniously integrates detachment and involvement in the world. This is a noble ethical synthesis in which the seeker while fixing his gaze on the Ultimate, the Absolute, at the same time looks upon the sphere of duty in the world as real, and calling for his earnest endeavour to do good and to bring good to others. The earth has been called Dharamsal (place or field of righteousness, on which man is to engage in righteous action and not to retire to the world of self-imposed idleness.³⁵

All this stands contrary to the extreme Vedantic belief that the phenomenal world is false and illusion (*mithiya/maya*). But the scheme of life commended by Guru Nanak is not the way of recluse but that of the devoted unassuming man of action.³⁶ Man is to be engaged in action that may further God's plan of righteousness in the world. The path of *bhakti* may make a call for sacrifice and martyrdom.³⁷

Many elements in the thought of Guru Nanak have affinity with Sufi concepts which suggest Muslim influence. But the apparent similarity is misleading. No doubt Islam with its strong emphasis on unity of God, its casteless view of society and its belief that it was through family life and social responsibility that man served God, might have expected to be commended by Guru Nanak, but formalism of Indian Islam earned his disapproval.

In fact Guru Nanak explicitly rejected the version of Islam he came into contact. There are occasional references to such contacts in his *bani*.

It is neither necessary nor feasible to try to discover Muslim influence in Guru Nanak's pattern of teaching. That he was aware of current Muslim thought is without doubt. That some of his admonitions are addressed to Muslims must be taken into consideration. But his teachings show at the most only a marginal influence of Sufism, encouraging certain development but in no case providing the actual source of the new innovations, introduced by him. Almost all evident affinities with Islam found in the theology of Guru Nanak can be traced back to native Indian traditions. Besides, there is a conspicuous lack of Sufi terminology in the religious thought of Guru Nanak. The use of Persian terms common among Sufis (used by Guru Nanak) indicate no Sufi influence, but rather, Guru

35. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 71, see also p. 1280.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 529 & 1412.

Nanak's proficiency in the Persian language. In choosing names of God his preference is strongly for Puranic names and when dealing with the concept which has obvious affinities with Sufi beliefs he will preferably use a non-Sufi term. Moreover, some of the fundamental aspects of Guru Nanak's doctrines like his acceptance of *Karma*, belief in transmigration of soul are in direct conflict with Islam. Further, his belief in the need to destroy *maya* through *nam simran* does not correspond to the Sufi technique of *dhikr*, and the concept of five *khands* (realms of Japuji) do not go along even remotely with the *maqamat* of Sufis. The emphasis of Guru Nanak on the importance of *guru* and union with God could have cut no ice with contemporary Muslims and were never addressed to them. May be, Guru Nanak visited Baba Farid's successor at Pak Patan, but no dialogues with Sufis are recorded in his *bani* as one with the Siddhas and Yogis (*Siddh Gosht*). It seems, such an inter-faith dialogue with the Muslims could not have been possible in that age.

No doubt Islam through Sufism provided a strong encouragement in strengthening monotheistic tendencies and belief in the omnipresence of God. But the monotheism of Guru Nanak is an independent concept and must be regarded primarily as an inheritance from *bhakti* tradition rather than an influence of Islam. Therefore, the impact of Muslim influence upon the thought of Guru Nanak must accordingly be regarded as relatively slight. However, this observation should not be pressed to total rejection of the impact of Islam on the thought of Guru Nanak. The *Sant* traditions had already absorbed a certain measure of Islamic influence. Most of the elements in Guru Nanak which suggest Muslim influence evidently reached him through *Sant* tradition. Therefore, the influence of Islam on Guru Nanak was received through 'cultural fusion', it was limited and it had no fundamental significance in his theology.

It is equally important to study Guru's attitude to Hinduism or Islam. It would be wrong to make generalized statement and say that Guru Nanak regarded Hinduism or Islam as either true or false. Such stereotyped view of the major contemporary religious systems is too doubtful to be held by the Great Guru. He did not doubt their sacred texts but he condemned the use to which these were being put. Yet he stops short of declaring these as eternal. On the evidence of his *bani* the conclusion must be reached that Guru Nanak rarely expressed an attitude towards Hinduism or Islam as such. Normally he viewed them in a general, comprehensive way. His

comments are usually directed at particular aspects, more often of practice than of belief.

Guru Nanak proclaimed the unity of God and refused to recognize that Hindus and Muslims were fundamentally different. For example, Guru Nanak's first words after his enlightenment were 'Na Hindu Na Musalman' (there is no Hindu, no Musalman). The true intent and meaning of what Guru Nanak uttered on the occasion of his mystic experience has plausible answers :

Whether he meant that deep down in the substratum of Aryan and Semitic Religions there is an identity of base or whether he intended to convey that the truth of both had been obscured and lost to their practitioners on account of verbal formulae and empty rituals, it was a fit formula for the commencement of his divine mission that demands acceptance of genuine dialogue rather than formal conversion as the goal of transcending particularism of condemning cultures and fending religions.

The aim of the Guru seemed to discover a universal concept, not syncretic amalgam, but deeper penetration of universal spiritualism :

I, a jobless minstrel (*dhadi*) was assigned a rewarding task.³⁸

All great truths were, for him, the property of human race and not restricted to a particular faith. He aspired for a universal religion. Guru Nanak said :

For one, who practiseth truth there is only one religion.³⁹

In his view, to attain the truth, it was necessary to be truthful and to be more than a Hindu or a Muslim, one must possess direct knowledge of God through His Grace. The real religion is not in symbols, forms or dogmas, it lies in the experience, the soul, and its union with the Supreme Reality. The Guru made concrete efforts to free the faith from cultural restrictions, seeking to liberate truth from constraints which had obscured it.

Guru Nanak's message was universal in the sense that he was owned both by the Hindus and the Muslims. The popular saying : *Baba Nanak Shah Fakir; Hinduwan da guru Muslmana da Peer* is a documentary evidence of his legacy. According to Guru Nanak both Hinduism and Islam had lost their merits on account of the negation of faith by their followers. The Guru appealed to the man underneath a Hindu or a Muslim. But he

38. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 1188, see also p. 20 and p. 62.

made no attempt at uniting Hinduism and Islam of his days. He had no intention or inclination for such a pedestrian, programme.

An objective study of Guru Nanak's beliefs and teachings would amply demonstrate that his message was mainly addressed to Hindus of his days and took the Hindu background of thought and philosophy for granted of course with the originality of the pattern of thought, evolved by him.

Guru Nanak laid the foundation of a liberal theology within the protestant framework. Not only the obligation of doctrinal orthodoxy has been abandoned but also every fixed position i.e., rituals, rites, sacraments, customs and ceremonies, *Varan* and *Jati* and even adherence to classical languages has become open to question. It is a distinguished contribution of Guru Nanak in context of Indian Religious traditions that he rejected the traditional languages as medium of religion. Guru Nanak was a prophet with universal vision and humanitarian spirit. He was very much concerned with the spiritual emancipation and social uplift of the common man. He did not compile and preached his message through the language of the *Vedas* (Sanskrit) and *Quran* (Arabic). The knowledge of Sanskrit and Arabic was confined only to a section of society. The majority of Indian masses were unfamiliar with both the languages. Guru Nanak selected local languages as medium for religion, *bhakti* and propagation. Before, Guru Nanak Sufis, Naths, Siddhas and radical *bhaktas* had used local languages as medium of communication for propagation but not for religion (scripture). Guru Nanak made extensive use of medieval Indian dialects; Punjabi, Braj, Khari Boli, Sant Bhakha and also adopted Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic vocabulary according to the requirement of the context, audience and mode of theme in his hymns. He mainly addressed to the Hindus, although there is a considerable number of compositions addressed or referred to Muslims also.

Guru Nanak's major concern is spiritual. But he has used secular vocabulary for philosophical purpose. It is a historical fact, that movement of men in medieval India helped to spread ideas far beyond its homeland. The origin of Sikhism took place in the period when India passed through a process of cultural transition. The medium of spiritual and secular communication used in the *bani* of Guru Nanak are evidence of historical process of cultural fusion and political change which took place in the contemporary society. There is a considerable vocabulary preserved in the *bani* of Guru Nanak from Indo-Aryan and Muslim languages including areas of religion, mythology, folk-lore, administration and law. Even vocabulary

from the more common concern of domestic life as well as literary form in their current usage belonging to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have been used. Therefore, the socio-cultural relevance of the contents of the text of Guru Nanak's teaching may provide a documentary evidence of the inheritance of the cultural history of Medieval Punjab in context to world civilization. Even the communicative devices of Guru Nanak's teachings with emotional orientation (*Ragas*) have an inherent quality of universal appeal.

What distinguished Guru Nanak from the *bhaktas* and the saints was his revolutionary and progressive outlook supported by positive and practical action. Even the social impact of teachings of the radical *bhaktas* (i.e. Kabir, Ravidas and Namdev etc.) fell short of projecting and affecting any major social transformation and effecting any major social change into the Hindu society. They intended not to bring any structural change in the society but rather they seem to intend for the modification and adjustment within the existing framework of Hindu *Varan ashram dharma* and fixity of the Brahminical orthodoxy. Among the radical religious reformers it was only Guru Nanak who consolidated the spirit of dissent and protest against religious dogmatism, polytheism, caste-labour, gender inequality, social discrimination, political exploitation and injustice into a coherent systematic coordination of spiritual metaphysics and temporal obligations. Guru Nanak projected new goals before the masses and sought to introduce a progressive religion based on the fundamental doctrine of unity of God and equality of mankind.

Therefore, Guru Nanak's mission culminated in a distinct faith and not a sect within the realm of the Indian Religious traditions. As an impact of Guru Nanak's teachings the land of Punjab became vehicle of spreading the message of a new social awareness in the Indian sub-continent. In fact, Guru Nanak envisaged a revolutionary transformation of the Indian society. He not only gave a new religious thought at metaphysical level but also took practical steps by introducing the institutions of *sangat*, *pangat*, *langar*, *nam simran*, *kirat karna*, *vand chhakna* and *sewa* to provide an ideal framework of an egalitarian society; which have in fact proved a nucleus of the Sikh Panth ever since its origin. It was the intensity and depth of Guru Nanak's message and mission not only on the spiritual but also at the temporal plane that served as an edifice for the evolution of Sikh community.

It is clearly evident from the above study that the theology of Guru Nanak projects the individual identity of Sikhism in a sharper focus. In comparison to religious traditions of Hinduism and Islam including Bhakti cult and Sufism, it is the faith of Nanak alone "which instead of seeking accommodation either within Hinduism or Islam, chose to protest against both of them, revolt against the former and confront the latter. It is in this revolutionary configuration of protest, revolt and confrontation that the inner urges and aspirations of Sikhism sought and achieved their basic articulation not only mystically and metaphysically but even historically."⁴⁰

The fact, that Guru Nanak laid the foundation of a distinct religious system does not mean that Guru Nanak saw his Panth as an alternative to the other faiths. The Guru probably saw it as a vehicle for continuing to witness to the Truth he had been preaching for all his life. For this purpose Guru Nanak introduced the institution of Guruship to carry on the task laid by him.

Ladies and gentlemen I thank you most sincerely for your kindness in giving me your valuable time for hearing my long speech. I shall be happier if you find any useful information and interpretation in what I read before you on our composite heritage.

40. Attar Singh, 'Guru Nanak's Vision of Religious Humanism' in *Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion*, Vol. I, Guru Nanak Foundation, New Delhi, Oct. 1982, p. 20.

AN ANALYSIS ABOUT GURU NANAK'S NATIVITY

Jiwant Kaur*

The rise of the Sikh power in the last decade of the eighteenth century aroused interest in the history of the Sikhs as people who began to be looked upon as serious contenders for power in the North-West of India. The process of historical investigation of Sikh literature particularly the *Janamsakhi* starts with the discovery and translation of *Puratan Janamsakhi* which Ernest Trumpp describes as fountain from which all the others have drawn largely.¹ Ernest Trumpp, a German Christian missionary is the first scholar to challenge the authenticity of *Bala Janamsakhi*. He subjoins a brief summary of the life of Guru Nanak and according to *Puratan Janamsakhi*, he records that Guru Nanak was born in Samvat 1526, in the month of Vaisakh (1469 A.D., April - May).²

With the establishment of first Singh Sabha, a controversy whether Guru Nanak had been born in the month of Kattik or Vaisakh regained currency. The European interest in the *Janamsakhi* study and the main motive of Singh Sabha for the revival of the glorious past of the Sikhs inspired the Sikh scholars to take up Sikh studies seriously in the field of *Janamsakhies*. Karam Singh Historian is first among the Sikh scholars who took to serious (sceptic in the modern terminology) historical scrutiny to resolve the controversy of the date of birth of Guru Nanak in his book *Kattik Ke Vaisakh*. In the present paper, an attempt has been made to analyse Karam Singh's point of view about Guru Nanak's birth.

On the basis of *Puratan Janamsakhi*, *Bhai Mani Singh's Janamsakhi*, *Mehma Prakash* and *Vairowal Wali Janamsakhi*, Karam Singh records that Guru Nanak was born on Vaisakh Sudi 3, Samvat 1526 (15 April 1469 A.D.), not in Kattik.³ Karam Singh writes that *Bhai Bala's Janamsakhi* is the earliest

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1. Dr. Ernest Trumpp, *The Adi Granth* (Munshiram Manohar Lal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1877), Introductory Essays, p.ii.
2. *Ibid.*, p.ii.
3. Karam Singh Historian, *Kattik Ke Vaisakh* (Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 2003), p.121.

record which says that Guru Nanak was born on *Kattik Puranmashi*. It is argued by the scholar that in order to show Guru Nanak's inferiority to Hindal, Niranjanians gave Guru's date of birth in Kattik in place of Vaisakh.⁴ Karam Singh records that the Niranjanians might have followed the general belief prevailed in the Punjab that a woman who gave birth to a child in the month of Bhadron or Kattik was turned out of the house. Most of the people used to give her to a brahmin as a charitable donation and then later on they used to purchase her from him. By doing so the evil influence of the child was erased.⁵

Karam Singh quotes M.A. Macauliffe for giving another interesting story about the change of month from Vaisakh to Kattik. He says that Giani Sant Singh, a devout and ardent Sikh of the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, proclaimed Kattik as the month of Guru Nanak's birth. Scholar Karam Singh writes that five miles from Amritsar, at Ram Tirath (a place of pilgrimage of the Hindu god Ram), there used to be a big fair held on *Kattik Puranmashi*. It was in a spirit of opposition to prevent the Sikhs from making pilgrimage to Ram Tirath that Giani Sant Singh proclaimed Kattik as the month of Guru Nanak's birth. It was in Samvat 1925 (1868 A.D.) that the celebration of Kattik as the natal month of Guru Nanak was started in Nankana Sahib.⁶ As has been stated above, M.A. Macauliffe seems to believe in the superstition vogue in the Punjab in those days that Giani Sant Singh in a spirit of opposition, attracted a large number of Sikh adherents and devised the celebration of Guru Nanak's birth in the month of Kattik.⁷ Some of the contemporary scholars of Karam Singh shared the same view that how the month of Kattik was subsequently ratified by orthodox Sikhs as the month of Guru Nanak's nativity. Giani Satnam Singh⁸ and Gurbakhash Singh 'Shamsher'⁹ believe that it was upto Samvat 1872, that the anniversary fair of Guru Nanak's birth was always celebrated in Vaisakh. It was Giani Sant Singh who resented about the Sikhs going astray by attending a Hindu fair of Ram Tirath at Amritsar in the month of November. To divert the attention of the Sikhs, he devised the celebration of Guru Nanak's birthday at about the same time.

Giani Isher Singh Nara has taken up an issue of the highest importance

4. *Ibid.*, p.121.

5. *Ibid.*, p.122.

6. *Ibid.*, p.122.

7. M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol-I (S.Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1963), p.lxxxiv.

8. Braham Singh Ferozpuri (Ed.), 'Kattik Sudi Puranmashi Nu Adi Guru Da Prakash Dihara- Itihasic Bhul', *Sikh Mission*, Monthly, (Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, 1947), p.27.

9. Hira Singh Dard (Ed.) 'Asli Gurpurab Kis Tarikh Nu Hai', *Fulwari*, Vol-16, (Lahore, 1940), p.52.

to the entire Sikh community. His '*Vaisakh Nahin Kattik* glistens with sparkle of brilliance and is devoted to clarifying the final acceptable date of Guru Nanak's birth. Regarding the unlucky months Bhadron or Kattik, he records that Banda Singh Bahadur and Maharaja Ranjit Singh took birth on Kattik Sudi 13, Samvat 1727 (Nov. 1670) and on November 2, 1780 respectively. Both of them were the rulers of the Punjab, introduced coins in the names of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh and started Nanak Shahi Samvat. Isher Singh Nara gives an other example that Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru was born on 14th Nov, 1889. All these were great and renowned personalities of the past whose life history helped Isher Singh to dispose off the unscientific and unhistorical viewpoint raised by Karam Singh regarding Kattik as unlucky.¹⁰ Khazan Singh is conscious that the weight of Hindu ideas and superstitions played an important role for the acceptance of Vaisakh as the month of Guru Nanak's birth. He argues that Vaisakh gained currency because of those people who were not then purged of their Hindu ideas and superstitions except for the giving up of idol worship, took the fancy to fix the birth day in correspondence with new year's day which was then held to be very auspicious.¹¹

Here the point of curiosity is about the reaction generated by the followers of Vaisakh date after 1872. Did they raised only dissenting voice against it or not? How is it possible to change suddenly a tradition with a life of about two hundred years? A satisfactory answer to such questions can be helpful to a considerable extent in deciding the natal month of Guru Nanak. The above scholars do not quote any authentic record to authenticate their views and such views can not be accepted unless supported by strong evidence.

Karam Singh identifies one couplet of Var 12th of Bhai Gurdas:-

ਕੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾਂ
ਭਾਇ ਭਗਤਿ ਗੁਰਪੁਰਬ ਕਰੰਦੇ।¹²

Here the scholar is of the view that Gurpurabs were celebrated in the times of Bhai Gurdas too *Puratan Janamsakhi* was written in those times pointing to a particular day of the birth of Guru Nanak. Karam Singh believes that Bhai Gurdas mentioned about the celebration of Gurpurab because he must have known of the date of Gurpurab.¹³ Gurbakhash Singh 'Shamsher'

10. Giani Isher Singh Nara, *Vaisakh Nahi Kattik* (Delhi Gate Bazaar, Delhi, 1970), p.49.

11. Khazan Singh, *History of Sikh Religion*, (Deptt. of Language, Punjab, Patiala, 1914), p.33.

12. Dr. Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, Vol-I (Vision & Venture, New Delhi, 1998), p.303.

13. Karam Singh Historian, *Kattik Ke Vaisakh*, p.122.

also holds the similar view that Bhai Gurdas has mentioned about the celebration of Gurpurabs only because in those times, there must have been celebrated Gurpurabs in accordance with the *Puratan Janamsakhi*.¹⁴

Giani Isher Singh Nara identifies a couplet of Var 1st of Bhai Gurdas:

ਚਰਨ ਗਹੇ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਦੇ ਸਤਿ ਸਬਦ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਰਾਇਆ।

ਭਾਓ ਭਗਤਿ ਗੁਰਪੁਰਬਿ ਕਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ।¹⁵

Giani Isher Singh Nara is of the view from the above couplet that when Bhai Gurdas became a Sikh of Guru Amar Dev (Guru Amar Das), then Guru Amar Dev liberated him through the 'true word' and instructed him about the celebrations of Gurpurabs. Later on when it became a regular feature to celebrate Gurpurabs, then Bhai Gurdas recited the above couplet (ਕੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾਂ ਭਾਓ ਭਗਤਿ ਗੁਰਪੁਰਬ ਕਰੰਦੇ।) in honour of those Sikhs who enthusiastically celebrated Gurpurabs.¹⁶

Dr. Jodh Singh also intimates that the specific couplet means sacrifice unto those Gurusikhs who celebrate Guru's anniversaries with full devotion.¹⁷ Bhai Gurdas has not given any dates of the historical events of the lives of the Guru. "Gurpurab" simply meant celebrating auspicious days connected with the lives of the Gurus.

Karam Singh has strongly tried to build the support of Bhai Gurdas for the Vaisakh date. He makes the following statement regarding Bhai Gurdas's testimony about Guru Nanak's birth date:

ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਿਆ ਮਿਟੀ ਧੁੰਧਜਗਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਆ।

ਜਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਤਾਰੇ ਛਪਿ ਅੰਧੇਰੁ ਪਲੋਆ।

ਸਿੰਘੁ ਬੁਕੇ ਮਿਰਗਾਵਲੀ ਭੰਨੀ ਜਾਇ ਨਾ ਧੀਰਿ ਧਰੋਆ।

ਜਿਥੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਪੂਜਾ ਆਸਣੁ ਥਾਪਣਿ ਸੋਆ।

ਸਿਧਾਸਣਿ ਸਭਿ ਜਗਤਿ ਦੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਆਇ ਮਤੇ ਜੇ ਕੋਆ।

ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ਹੋਵੈ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਸਦਾ ਵਿਸੋਆ।

ਬਾਬੇ ਤਾਰੇ ਚਾਰਿ ਚਕਿ ਨਉ ਖੰਡਿ ਪ੍ਰਿਥਵੀ ਸਚਾ ਢੋਆ

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਕਲਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਹੋਆ॥¹⁸

Karam Singh records that *hovai kirtan sada visoa* means the first of Vaisakh indicating birthday of the Guru.¹⁹ *Khalsa Rahit Prakash*²⁰ and *Sikh*

14. Hira Singh Dard (Ed.), *Fulwari*, p.52.

15. Dr. Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, Vol-1, p.31.

16. Giani Isher Singh Nara, *Vaisakh Nahi Kattik*, pp.17-18.

17. Dr. Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, Vol-1, p.303.

18. *Ibid.*, p.57.

19. Karam Singh Historian, *Kattik Ke Vaisakh*, p.123.

20. Babu Teja Singh, *Khalsa Rahit Prakash* (Manager Pustak Bhandhar, Panch Khand, year 456), pp.63-64.

*Mission*²¹ (1941) also record Bhai Gurdas's testimony that *hovai kirtan sada visoa* brings to light that Guru Nanak's natal month was Vaisakh.

Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, the eminent lexicographer gives other explanation of *visoa* in his *Mahan Kosh*:

Visoa – i. Vaisakh di Sankrant; Vaisakhi.

(The first day of the month Vaisakh; Vaisakhi)

ii. Sal da navan din: Nauroz.

(The first day of the year; new year day)

iii. Hovai kirtan sada visoa: nit Nauroz rehnda hai.²²

There is *kirtan* in every home and the joy of new year's day is felt every day. Dr. Jodh Singh, while explaining the 27th Pauri of Var 1st, tells about the dark age (*Kaliyug*) in which Guru Nanak was born. With that every home became a place of dharma where singing of hymns became a daily liturgy.²³ Dr. Jodh Singh doesn't mention *sada visoa* as a particular day of Guru Nanak's birth. Khazan Singh gives his opinion that it is an adjective qualifying the *kirtan* and means that the Lord's laudatory hymns shall be perpetually recited in every house as on the happy and joyful new year's day for the purpose of such recitations. In no case, it goes to establish that the first of Vaisakh was given by Bhai Gurdas as the Guru's birthday.²⁴ Dr. Tarlochan Singh states that it is difficult to understand by what stretch of imagination the words *sada visoa* 'every new year, can be explained to indicate Guru Nanak's birth on the 3rd day of the light – half of Vaisakh. He writes that the year 1469 A.D., the new year day or the 1st of Vaisakh was on Monday 27th March. The alleged birth date according to Vaisakh Sudi 3rd would then fall on 15th April. The difference is of nineteen days. The *visoa* or the new year day falls on 20th Vaisakh, i.e. 27th March and not on 15th April, the alleged birth date.²⁵ W.H. McLeod argues here that Bhai Gurdas is silent on this particular issue, although it has been claimed that references in his works point unmistakably to a particular date. Proponents of both sides of the controversy have made this claim, each side advancing a different reference

21. Braham Singh Ferozपुरi (Ed.) *Bheya Anand Jagat wich, Kal Taran Guru Nanak Iea*', *Sikh Mission*, p.19.

22. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahankosh*, Part-iv (Language Dept, Punjab, Patiala, 1960), p.3227.

23. Dr. Jodh Singh, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, Vol-1, p.57.

24. Khazan Singh, *History of Sikh Religion*, p.31.

25. Dr. Tralochan Singh, 'Guru Nanak's Birthday: Kattik or Vaisakh – Bhai Gurdas's Testimony', *Sikh Review*, Vol. 12 (Lindsary street, Calcutta, 1964), pp.26-27.

in support of its case. A few supporters of the Vaisakh dating have argued that a line from stanza 27th of Var 1st (ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ਹੋਵੈ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਸਦਾ ਵਿਸੋਆ।) indicates the first day of Vaisakh as the correct date.²⁶ He claims that the word *visoa* is a cryptic reference to the Guru's birth having occurred on the day of the Vaisakh festival. It is a claim which has received little support and there can be no doubt that it is incorrect. The translation should read:-

"In every house a dharamsal was established and kirtan was sung an unending Vaisakhi festival".²⁷ So *sada visoa* does not confirm to a particular day of Guru Nanak's birth.

Other controversy has come to the claim that the first couplet of Bhai Gurdas's *Kabitt Sawayya* 345 points to *Kattik Puranmashi*:

ਕਾਰਤਕ ਮਾਸ ਰੁਤਿ ਸਰਦ ਪੁਰਨਮਾਸੀ,
ਆਠ ਜਾਮ ਸਾਠਿ ਘਰੀ ਆਜ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਾਰੀ ਹੈ॥
ਅਉਸਰ ਅਭੀਚ ਬਹੁ ਨਾਇਕ ਕੀ ਨਾਇਕਾ ਹੁਇ,
ਰੂਪ ਗੁਨ ਜੋਬਨ ਸਿੰਗਾਰ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਹੈ॥
ਚਾਤਿਰ ਚਤੁਰ ਪਾਠ, ਸੇਵਕ ਸਹੇਲੀ ਸਾਠਿ,
ਸੰਪਦਾ ਸਮਗ੍ਰੀ ਸੁਖ ਸਹਜ ਸੁਚਾਰੀ ਹੈ॥
ਸੁੰਦਰ ਮੰਦਰ, ਸੁਭ ਲਗਨ ਸੰਜੋਗ ਭੋਗ,
ਜੀਵਨ ਜਨਮ ਧੰਨਿ, ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਪਿਆਰੀ ਹੈ॥²⁸

Karam Singh interprets this *Kabitt* as a conventional reference to the month of Kattik in the style of the *barah-maha*, the twelve month or calendar poem.²⁹ Some of the scholars argue that this *Kabitt* refers to Guru Nanak's turn to enter the world and on the basis of this interpretation it has been claimed that Bhai Gurdas testifies to *Kattik Puranmashi* as the date of the Guru Nanak's birth.

Dr. Tarlochan Singh records that the study of Bhai Gurdas's *Kabitt Sawayyas* is unfortunately ignored because the language is difficult and ornate Sanskritised Braj Bhasha and the subject matter is deep mysticism, profound philosophic reflections and comments. The historical and theological importance of these mystic poems have never been seriously studied.³⁰ Regarding *Kabitt Sawayya* 345, Dr. Tarlochan Singh is of the view that Bhai

26. W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and The Sikh Religion* (Oxford At the Clarendon Press, 1968), pp.94-95.

27. *Ibid.*, p.95.

28. Bhai Sewa Singh, *Kabitt Sawaiye Bhai Gurdas Ji Steek* (Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1996), p.223.

29. Karam Singh Historian, *Kattik Ke Vaisakh*, p.124.

30. Dr. Tarlochan Singh, *Sikh Review*, Vol.12, p.35.

Gurdas has in every clear words sung the glory of *Kattik Puranmashi* and had indicated the advent of Guru Nanak. He writes that Karam Singh without going into the meaning of this verse dismisses it as an ornamental poetry. All the 675 *Kabitt Sawayyas* of Bhai Gurdas are written in the type of poetry and there is not a word or line which does not have deep meaning and significance.³¹ Isher Singh Nara claims that *Kabitt Sawayya* 345 points to *Kattik Puranmashi* referring to Guru Nanak's turn to enter the world.³² W.H. McLeod intimates that the couplet of *Kabitt Sawayya* 345 may be interpreted as a particular person's birth but it is also true that it may be interpreted as a conventional reference to the month of Kattik in the style of *barah – maha*, the twelve month or calendar poem.³³ But the balance of probability goes in favour of Karam Singh in W.H. McLeod's writing as he writes that there is no reference of Guru Nanak in the *Kabitt Sawayya* 345; the form of *Kabitt Sawayya* is a common one in Punjabi literature had been an entirely natural for Bhai Gurdas to have used; the reference of *Kabitt Sawayya* is to the present, not to a past event and fourthly, W.H. McLeod says that *Janamsakhis* of the time of Bhai Gurdas refer to Vaisakh.³⁴ Here W.H. McLeod does not give any satisfactory explanation for *Kabitt Sawayya* 345. Hari Ram Gupta enunciates most conceivable basis that one day after his bath (in the Bein Naddi), Nanak lay for rest in a cave on the banks of Bein and there fell into a trance. It was at dawn on the full-moon-day in Kattik 1496, that Nanak regained consciousness and with it came enlightenment. This was the day of Nanak's spiritual birth and could justly be celebrated as such on *Kattik Puranmashi*.³⁵ To support this analogy, Hari Ram Gupta quotes Bhai Gurda's *Kabitt Sawayya* 345:

ਕਾਰਤਕ ਮਾਸ ਰੁਤਿ ਸਰਦੁ ਪੂਰਨਮਾਸੀ,
ਅਠ ਜਾਮ ਸਾਠਿ ਘਰੀ ਆਜ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਾਰੀ ਹੈ॥

(*Jam* is *pehar* or a period of three hours and *ghari* means 24 minutes).

Hari Ram Gupta purports this *Kabitt* as Guru Nanak had obtained omniscience at this hour. He argues very strongly that this *Kabitt* does not refer to Guru Nanak's natal day but to the day of his spiritual regeneration.

31. *Ibid.*, pp.36-37.

32. Giani Isher Singh Nara has on very plausible grounds decided about *Kabitt Sawayya* 345 pointing to *Kattik Puranmashi*.

Giani Isher Singh Nara, *Vaisakh Nahi Kattik*, pp.43-46.

33. W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and The Sikh Religion*, p.95.

34. *Ibid.*, p.95.

35. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-1 (Munshiram Manohar Lal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1973), p.53.

From religious point of view, the date of saint's spiritual birth is as important as his physical birth. Hence the celebration of Guru Nanak's birthday on *Kattik Puranmashi* is perfectly justified.³⁶

Karam Singh follows the view that almost all the writers agree that Guru Nanak lived for seventy years, five months and seven days. He died on Asu Sudi 10, Samvat 1596. By subtracting the age of Guru Nanak from the date of Guru's death, he gives the date as Vaisakh Sudi 3, Samvat 1526 as the date of birth.³⁷ Karam Singh in his *Gurpurab Nirney* records that the exact date of death of Guru Nanak was Asu Sudi 10, Samvat 1596, as the exact equivalent of 22 Sep., 1539 A.D.³⁸

Puratan Janamsakhi gives Asu Sudi 10, Samvat 1595, the tenth day of the light half of the month of Asu, Samvat 1595, which would have fallen during September, 1538 A.D.³⁹ Santokh Singh gives *Kattik Puranmashi* as the date of Guru Nanak's birth but also records that Guru Nanak lived for seventy years, five months, and seven days.⁴⁰ Counted back from the date of Guru Nanak's death, this gives a date close to Vaisakh Sudi 3.

Kesar Singh writes that Guru Nanak lived for seventy years, five months and seven days. He took demise on Asu Vadi 10, Samvat 1596.⁴¹ Giani Gian Singh writes that Guru Nanak died on Asu Vadi 10, Samvat 1596.⁴² Khazan Singh records that Guru Nanak breathed his last on Asu Vadi 10, Samvat 1596 (1539 A.D.).⁴³ M.A. Macauliffe gives the date of Guru Nanak's death as it was on the 10th day of the light half of the month of Asu, Samvat 1596 (1538 A.D.).⁴⁴ W.H. McLeod records primary evidence supporting Asu Vadi 10, Samvat 1596 as he found this date in manuscript copies of the *Adi Granth*. He writes that many of the extant manuscript copies of the *Adi Granth* include lists of the dates on which each of the ten Gurus died and the testimony of these lists strongly favour Asu Vadi 10 dating. W.H. McLeod gives reference of *Kartarpur manuscript* and believes it to be the original copy of the *Adi*

36. *Ibid.*, pp.53-54.

37. Karam Singh Historian, *Kattik Ke Vaisakh*, pp.123-124.

38. Karam Singh Historian, *Gurpurab Nirney* (Bhai Bahadur Singh, Wazir Hind Press, Amritsar, 1912), p.57.

39. Bhai Vir Singh (Ed.), *Puratan Janamsakhi* (Bhai Vir Singh Sahit Sadan, New Delhi, 1996), p.209.

40. Bhai Vir Singh (Ed.), *Nanak Prakash*, canto 57 (90), Vol. iv, p.1255.

41. Bhai Kesar Singh, 'Gur Pranali', *Gur Pranalian* (Sikh History Society, Amritsar), p.03.

42. Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash* (Language Dept. Punjab, Patiala, 1970), p.76.

43. Khazan Singh, *History of Sikh Religion*, p.109.

44. M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. I, p.191.

Granth, that it contains the date of Guru Nanak's death as Asu Vadi 10, Samvat 1596.⁴⁵ Dr. Hari Ram Gupta records that Guru Nanak lived for seventy years, five months and seven days and died on Asu Sudi 10 Samvat 1596 Bikrami i.e. September 22, 1539 A.D. By counting back from Guru Nanak's date of death, he proves that Guru Nanak was born in Vaisakh (15 April, 1469 A.D.).⁴⁶

The above discussion shows a remote possibility in favour of Vaisakh date. The first to change Guru Nanak's date of birth among the earliest biographies of Guru Nanak was Meharban, nephew of Guru Arjan Dev and leader of the schismatic Mina sect. His father Prithi Chand was the eldest son of Guru Ram Das and as such had greatly resented being passed over as his father's successor in favour of his younger brother. He set himself as a rival to the Guru and who supported his claims were stigmatized as Minas or hypocrites and outcastes. After the death of Prithi Chand, Meharban guided Minas until his death in 1640. A belief survived that Meharban composed a *Janamsakhi* of Guru Nanak.⁴⁷ As the Minas were unquestionably guilty of positive schism, it becomes possible that at some stage they may have attempted to corrupt orthodox texts in the interests of their own pretensions. *Meharban Janamsakhi* falls within this category. Singh Sabha Bhasour, published a number of pamphlets. The pamphlet No. 09 discussed the date of birth of Guru Nanak and concluded in favour of Vaisakh.⁴⁸ *Gurparnali Gulab Singh* gives both the dates and points out that *Kattik Puranmashi* is correct and the other one introduced by Meharban is incorrect.⁴⁹ Those subsequent historians, who were misled by *Meharban Janamsakhi*, have accepted the date of birth of Guru Nanak as on April 15, 1469.

Kattik Puranmashi has been firmly established and there is a little likelihood that the custom of holding the annual celebrations in November be abandoned in favour of April. Kesar Singh Chibber's *Bansavalinama*,⁵⁰ Giani Gian Singh's *Panth Prakash*,⁵¹ Bhai Santokh Singh's *Nanak Prakash*,⁵² Pandit

45. W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and The Sikh Religion*, p.100.

46. Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol-1, p.54.

47. Harbans Singh (Ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol-III (Pbi, Uni. Patiala, 1997), p.85.

48. Babu Teja Singh, *Khalsa Rahit Prakash*, pp.59-65.

49. Kavi Gulab Singh, 'Ath Gur-Pranali Likhte', *Guru Pranalian* (Sikh History Society, Amritsar), pp.22-23.

50. Kesar Singh Chibber, *Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka* (Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1997) p.46.

51. Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Prakash*, p.30.

52. Bhai Santokh Singh, *Guru Nanak Prakash* (Language Dept. Punjab, Patiala) p.62.

Tara Singh Nirotam's *Gur Tirath Sanghreh*,⁵³ Khazan Singh's *History of the Sikh Religion*,⁵⁴ Sewa Ram Singh's *The Divine Master*⁵⁵ all support the Kattik for the natal month of Guru Nanak. Baba Piare Lal Bedi,⁵⁶ sixteenth generation of Guru Nanak and Baba Ganesha Singh Bedi,⁵⁷ eleventh generation of Guru Nanak, accept full moon of Kattik as the date of birth of Guru Nanak.

To sum up it can be said that both the traditions are strong but there should be no dispute about the natal month because *kattik Puranmashi* has been acknowledged by the Sikh community as well as *Chief Khalsa Diwan* to celebrate Guru Nanak's birth anniversary in November.⁵⁸ Giani Gian Singh admired the book but never desired any debate regarding issues such as Guru Nanak's date of birth.⁵⁹ As far as the views of Karam Singh are concerned, he writes that "whatever I write, I don't say it is all true. I am not adamant about Vaisakh as well as for *Kattik Puranmashi* for the date of birth of Guru Nanak. I write whatever I thought was right."⁶⁰ It proves that the facts raised by Karam Singh in *Kattik Ke Vaisakh* were not verified scientifically. The position as of now is that there is a long presumption in favour of Kattik tradition. If any one contests this tradition, the burden lies on him to show that it is wrong till he proves that tradition to hold the field. To arrive at a definite conclusion of the above controversy, a deeper study has to be made.

53. Pandit Tara Singh Nirotam, *Gur Tirath Sanghreh* (Camp Ambala, 1884) p.09.

54. Khazan Singh, *History of Sikh Religion*, p.57.

55. Sewa Ram Singh, *The Divine Master*, p.18.

56. Giani Ishar Singh Nara, *Vaisakh Nahi Kattik*, p.13.

57. Baba Ganesha Singh Bedi, *Guru Nanak Surjode Janam Sakhi* (Language Dept. Punjab, Patiala, 1990), p.38.

58. (i) Bhai Vir Singh continued to believe in *Kattik Puranmashi* inspite of his admiration for *Puratan Janamsakhi*. When the *Chief Khalsa Diwan* Printed the second edition of Karam Singh's *Kattik Ke Vaisakh*, it destroyed all the copies probably on the advice of Bhai Vir Singh. Atlast *Chief Khalsa Diwan* realized that the book or the opinion of Karam Singh, even though he himself in a letter to Baba Prem Singh Hoti repented later, is a bad practise.

Dr. Tarlochan Singh, *Guru Nanak - Founder of Sikhism* (Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Delhi, 1969), p. 491.

ii) Dr. Kirpal Singh writes that many copies of the *Janamsakhi* of Bhai Mani Singh accept the date of Vaisakh as the natal month but a strong tradition was set up to which not any Sikh or Singh could change. Kattik month was proved as the natal month of Guru Nanak's birthday in the presence of *Guru Granth Sahib* and government declared holiday for that particular day. So instead of Vaisakh, Kattik should thought to be pure and it is acceptable and should be taken into consideration.

Dr. Kirpal Singh, *Janam Sakhi Parampara* (Pbi. Uni. Patiala, 1969), p.330.

59. Karam Singh Historian, *Kattik Ke Vaisakh* (Lahore Book Shop, Ludhiana, 2003), p.8.

60. *Ibid.*, p.128.

GURU GOBIND SINGH : FROM TALWANDI SABHO TO NANDED

K.S. Bajwa*

On 30th October 1706 CE, Guru Gobind Singh left Talwandi Sabho for Ahmednagar (Daccan) to see Emperor Aurangzeb. Delayed reply to his letter (Zafarnama) sent to the Emperor through Bhai Daya Singh was, perhaps, agitating his mind. Therefore, without waiting more, he decided to leave Talwandi Sabho. However, three days before he left for Daccan, Gurujee addressed Bhai Mani Singh to perform *Akhandpath* (non-stop recitation of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*). The opening *Shabd* (*Mukhwak*) was as :-

Todi Mohalla 5

O True Guru, I have come to your sanctuary

*Grant me the peace and glory of the Lord's Name, and
remove my anxiety.¹*

On the third day, on *Kartik sudi 5th*, 30th October, 1706 CE., a watch after sunrise, the priest reciting, completed the *Paath*. After supplication, *Karah Parsad* was distributed among the congregation. On the same day after one and half watch after sunrise, Guru jee went to *Manjee Sahib*, a place associated with Guru Tegh Bahadur, and presented supplication. Thereafter, Bhai Bhupat Singh, Bhai Gulzar Singh along with five Sikhs were asked to go to Amritsar. Desa Singh was ordered to look after *Manjee Sahib*. A bullock-cart was provided for the ride of Mata Sunder Sarup Kaur and Mata Sahib Kaur. Younger brother of Rai Dalla Singh, Bhai Malla Singh and Gadariy (Godaie) Singh along with five Sikhs on horse-back were deputed to escort the Mothers. Five Sikhs, prominent

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1. Sainapat, *Gur Sobha*, (ed.) Ganda Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1996 (first 1967), pp. 141-42; *Guru Kian Sakhian*, (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1991, pp. 187-88; Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi 10*, (ed.) S.S. Ashok, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1999, pp. 215-16; Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, New Delhi, 2000, p.310; S.S. Gandhi, *Historian's Approach to Guru Gobind Singh*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2004, p. 316.

among them being Bhai Mani Singh and Sahib Gurbakhsh Singh got ready to remain in the service of Guru jee.²

Commencing his journey from Talwandi Sabho, after a little distance, Guru jee said good-bye to the Sikhs; Bhai Ram Singh, Trilok Singh and *et. al.* Bhai Man Singh, Ram Singh, the son of Bachiter Singh, Bawa Kahan Singh, Binod Singh and some other Sikhs kept on following on their horses. The Guru was proceeding ahead of everybody. Passing through and staying at the villages of Kewal, Jharrod, Jhandu, Sarsa etc., they encamped at the village Nauhar. At Sarsa, Guru jee got liberated Gulab Singh from the imprisonment of Nabhi Bakhsh, the *Chaudary* of village Khaulda. From Nauhar, he proceeded to village Bhadra where he was affectionately received by a Rajput family. Next, he halted at the villages: Sahewa, Bahaduran, Sahena, Madhu Singhnai and reached Phushkar Raj. The place had earlier been visited by Guru Nanak Dev. Incharge of this place, Pandit Chetan Misar gave a detailed account of Guru Nanak's visit to Guru Gobind Singh. Impressed with the ideas of the Guru, he took *Khande-di-Pahul* and joined Khalsa brotherhood. The Guru next visited Narainpur, a seminary of saint Dadu (also known as Dadu Dawara). Mahant Jait Ram, incharge of the seminary, held a long discourse with Guru jee; it revolved around diet, dress and living style of the Guru. Eventually, he gave way to the arguments of the Guru and requested to have meals at his *Ashram*.³ After this, Guru jee reached Kalot via Lali and Magharoda. At Kalot, on 30th November, 1706 CE, Bhai Daya Singh and Dharam Singh on way back from Ahmednagar met him and related to him their experiences in the Daccan. They informed that, Emperor's *Gurz-bardar* and *Mansabdar* had gone ahead towards Delhi with the *royal firman* for Munim Khan. After listening to them, Guru jee just smiled and said, "Daya Singh, last moment of the Emperor has arrived. He wont meet us," and moved on. However, they have just crossed the Aravli mountain when they received the news of the death of the Emperor.⁴ Guru jee put up his encampment outside the town of Baghaur. Baghaur was about 70 miles North-West of Udaipur city, and a Parganah head quarter in the erstwhile Udaipur state. Seeing them staying in the garden, the headmen of

2. Giani Gian Singh, *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Language Department, Punjab, Patiala, 1999, Part I, pp. 1089-90; *Guru Kian Sakhian*, p. 188; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, p. 317.
3. Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 1090-93; *Guru Kian Sakhian*, pp. 188-89; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, pp. 317-20.
4. *Gursobha*, pp. 143, 150; *Guru Kian Sakhian*, p. 189; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 219-20; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, p. 321.

the town, Chaudary Mahan Nand and Mokhra attacked the Khalsa. In the battle, both the headmen were killed while Bhai Dharam Singh was seriously wounded. However, other men of the town leaders took to their heel; the Khalsa was victorious. Due to the death of Aurangzeb, the Guru abandoned the idea of going to Ahmednagar. Bhai Mani Singh and Sahib Gurbakhsh accompanied by three other Sikhs were sent back to Punjab while the Guru moved towards Delhi to wait and watch the political development.⁵

At Delhi, the Guru first stayed in a house lying at the back of Humayun's tomb. The site is marked by the Gurdwara Damdama Sahib. As a token of love for Harijans of Delhi on account of Bhai Jaita's, valorous deed, the Guru shifted to the colony of shoe-makers called Mochi Bagh. The mochis served the Guru with great devotion. The Guru was so highly pleased with the residents of the colony that he changed its name to Moti Bagh, the abode of pearls. A Gurdwara to commemorate his visit was built at this place. It lies on the Ring Road now called Mahatma Gandhi Road.⁶

However, late Emperor Aurangzeb has survived by three sons : Muazzam, the living eldest, 64-years old, was the viceroy of North-West Provinces including Afghanistan and Baluchistan. Tara Azam, 54 years old and Kam Bakhsh, 40 years old were with the Emperor in the Daccan. Azam seized the imperial treasury, took command of Aurangzeb's army and declared himself king on 14th March, 1707 CE., and rushed towards Delhi. Muazzam hurried from Kabul to Delhi. At Lahore, he declared himself Emperor and assumed the title of Bahadur Shah. Collecting war material in the form of men and money from the Mughal officials in that part of the Empire, he reached Delhi on 20th May. Wazir Khan, the *faujdar* of Sarhind had contributed rupees eight lakhs towards the war funds. In the first week of June, Bahadur Shah left Delhi and took possession of treasures at Agra and moved towards Dholpur to measure sword with Azam, his rival claimant to the throne.⁷

Bahadur Shah was not unaware of Guru's valor and his influence in the Punjab, particularly among the Sikhs. Therefore, he thought it appropriate to enlist his help in the ensuing struggle for power, partly to avoid any Sikh trouble while he was busy in the war of succession, and

5. *Gur Sobha*, pp. 144-49; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 221-225; Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 1098; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, p. 321.

6. *Gur Sobha*, p. 153; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 233-34; Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 1105; Gupta, *Ibid.*, pp. 312-13.

7. *Gur Sobha*, p. 150; Gupta, *Ibid.*, p. 313.

partly to use the Sikhs in his cause. Bahadur Shah deputed Nand Lal to persuade the Guru to join with his Sikhs promising at the same time on behalf of Bahadur Shah that he would look into and redress grievances, he might have against his house. The Guru read the letter and listened too to the pleadings of Bhai Nand Lal and decided to help Bahadur Shah.⁸ Historians of Guru Gobind Singh have put forward many factors which prompted the Guru to make this decision. Since no known historical source shed light on this issue, therefore, their arguments are based on mere conjectures. No one can say with any degree of certainty about what was going on in Guru's mind while making this decision. Relying on circumstantial evidence, it appears that while deciding in his favour, the Guru must have kept in mind the past behaviour of Prince Muazzam. He knew very well that in spite of his father's instructions, the Prince had refused to attack Anandpur in 1695 CE. Very probably, the Guru thought if he emerged victorious, he would be more differential to his cause.⁹

The Khalsa force joined Bahadur Shah's army under the command of Bhai Dharam Singh. The battle was fought between the allied forces and Azam's army on 10th June, 1707 CE. at Jajau, between Agra and Dholpur. To ensure victory, the Guru himself took part in the battle and killed Azam with his own arrow. Now Bahadur Shah became an undisputed Emperor of the Mughal Empire. He expressed his gratitude to the Guru for the help and honoured the Sikhs who had taken part in the battle by giving them precious gifts to each of them.¹⁰

After about a month's stay, the Guru left Delhi for Agra to respond the invitation of Bahadur Shah. At Delhi, he had also visited the places associated with his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur : Gurdwara Sis Ganj and Gurdwara Rakab Ganj. Beside, he used to hold congregation of Sikh sangat twice daily. However before leaving Delhi, he made appropriate arrangements for the stay of Mata Sundri while Mata Sahib Kaur importuned him to allow her to accompany him. Eventually, the Guru yielded to her request. Enroute to Agra, he visited Mathura and encamped at

8. *Gur Sobha*, pp. 150-51; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 227-28; Jodh Singh, *Sri Kalgidhar Hulas*, Lahore, 1901, pp. 203-5; Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 1099-1102; Gupta, *Ibid.*, pp. 313-14; S. S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, p. 322.

9. Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 1099; J.S. Grewal, *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1982, p. 98; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, pp. 322-23.

10. Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 1103; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 229-31; *Guru Kian Sakhian*, pp. 189-90; Jodh Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 205-6; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, pp. 323-24.

Suraj Kund on the bank of river Jamna. At Brindaban, he visited almost all its famous places. He established his camp 12 kms. short of Agra and about 6 kms. from Bahadur Shah's camp.¹¹

Munim Khan *Khan-e-Khanan*, the Prime Minister of Bahadur Shah was the first to extend invitation to the Guru to have his *darshan* at his residence. The Guru responded to his call. He was warmly received and well entertained. The Guru shifted his camp to a nearby garden and held assemblies twice a day. Many people came to attend from far and near.¹²

On 23rd July, 1707 CE, Emperor Bahadur Shah invited the Guru to his court. He and his Sikhs, all armed, left for the court. They were stopped at the gate of the fort and were asked to disarm themselves. The Guru declined to do so. The Emperor ordered the gate keeper to allow the Guru alongwith one of his attendant to come in. Thus at the occasion of his meeting with the Emperor, the Guru was fully armed, impressively dressed with an aigrette fixed on his turban. His face looked resplendent and his bearing charismatic. The Emperor thanked him for his help in the battle and offered valuable presents to him. These included : a rich robe of honour, a jewelled scarf (*dhukhduki*) worth Rs.60,000, and rupees five lakhs in cash. Another present of costly clothes, jewellery and ornaments to the value of one lakh of rupees was granted for Mata Sundri and sent to Delhi. Besides, he requested the Guru for his continuous company as frequently as possible. However, contrary to the court etiquette the Guru did not wear the robe of honour in the Royal presence, rather asked his attendant to carry it to his camp; the Emperor did not react.¹³

The Guru stayed in his camp near Agra for about five months and during this period meetings with the Emperor were quite often. To all intent and purposes it appears that the dominant theme of their discussions remained religion and Sikh-Mughal relations. Since, the extent contemporary records does not shed any light on the issue what exactly transpired between the Guru and the Emperor, therefore, it can't be said

11. *Gur Sobha*, p. 154, Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 1105; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 232-37; Gupta, *Ibid.*, p. 314; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, p. 325.

12. *Gur Sobha*, pp. 154-55; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 238; Gupta, *Ibid.*, pp. 314-15; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, p. 325.

13. *Gur Sobha*, pp. 155-57; Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 1106, 1114; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 239-42; Grewal, *Ibid.*, p. 97; J.S. Grewal & S.S. Bal, *Guru Gobind Singh*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1967, pp. 150-151; *Mehma Parkash Vartak*, (ed.) K.S. Bajwa, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2004, p. 181.

with certainty as to what hopes were held out to the Guru by the Emperor. But there is no denying the fact that the Guru was hopefully looking forward to a satisfactory conclusion of his negotiations with the Mughal Emperor and soon expected to return to Anandpur. His *Hukamnama* to the *Sangat* of Dhaul dated 2nd, October 1707 CE, bear witness to it.¹⁴

However, Emperor's gesture of good-will towards the Guru implies many things but speaks of nothing certain. Several reasons can be assigned to his reservation. For example, the issue of succession to the throne had not yet been fully solved. His brother Kam Bakhsh was still alive and was commanding the resources of Daccan. He could be a source of trouble which proved true later on. On the other hand the Hill chiefs and the Rajput chiefs too could pose a threat to his power. Thus at this time, he could ill-afford to antagonise the Muslim fundamentalist's lobby at the court by going against the interests of Wazir Khan who had the solid backing of the *Naqshbandis*, then led by Khalifa Saifuddin. Also, Wazir Khan had contributed handsomely to the war funds of the Emperor. At the same time, he could not afford to offend the Guru who had a considerable following of his devoted Sikhs, scattered all over the Punjab, possessing the potential to disturb peace in North-West. Therefore, he was sagacious enough to realise that Guru's presence near the court was preferable to his dangerous freedom in the Punjab. With all probability, the Guru might have smelt the rat, but he did not think it prudent to break the negotiation, possibly with the hope that after consolidating his power, the Emperor might yield to his demands.¹⁵

On 12th November, 1707 CE, the Emperor left Agra for Rajasthan to quell insuregency. The Guru continued to stay back and joined the Emperor at Ajmer, probably in March, 1708 CE. He left Ajmer for Ujjain on 22nd March, 1708 CE. He halted at Chitor on 2nd April, 1708 CE. The Guru also accompanied him. Guru's *Palit* (adopted) son Zorawar Singh was anxious to see the fort. Accompanied by 50-60 comrades went up to the hill. The guards at the gate obstructed them saying that no body could enter the fort. A scuffle ensued in which the guards were killed. Thereupon, another strong contingent of troops (*fauj-e-digar*) emerged from a place of ambush (*kamingah*). A fierce fight took place. The Rajputs surrounded the Sikhs on all sides and destroyed all of them with bullets, arrows and stones. Zorawar

14. Ganda Singh (ed.), *Hukamname*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1999, pp. 186-87.

15. Grewal & Bal, *Ibid.*, pp. 150-52; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, pp. 326-30; Grewal, *Ibid.*, p. 98.

Singh, like a furious tiger struck down several men with his piercing sword and fell dead by the side of his companions. As the hostility of the Mughal court to the Guru was well known, the Rajputs seem to have taken such a drastic step without any fear of the Emperor. When this sad news reached the Guru, Mata Sahib Kaur, Daya Singh and other Sikhs felt remorseful. Guru Ji arranged the cremation of the bodies of Zorawar Singh and other Sikhs. The Emperor felt very apologetic on hearing the news, but did not take any action. Towards the end of April, 1708 CE., the Emperor arrived at Mandeshwar (Mandsor). When the imperial camp halted on the bank of river Narbada, a Muslim trooper killed the brave Man Singh, one of the surviving heroes of Chamkaur who had never parted from the Guru. The Emperor ordered that his murderer should be seized and handed over to the Guru for punishment. The Guru pardoned him, and thus gained great praise from the Muhammadans for his mercy and clemency. Hari Ram Gupta asserts that 'even these two events did not open the eyes of the Guru to his own safety'. But Prof. Gupta appears to be wrong in his conclusion. Perhaps, it was because of these two incidents that the Guru decided to part away from the imperial camp. For example, the Guru and the Emperor crossed river Narbada in the middle of May, 1708 CE. During his halts enroute, the Guru and the Emperor had their separate camps.¹⁶

Both, the Guru and the Emperor reached Burhanpur, situated on the river Tapti by the end of June or first week of July 1708 CE. The Guru decided to stay at Burhanpur. The *Sangat* of Burhanpur was thrilled at his arrival. They built a beautiful two-storied building for his stay besides making extensive arrangements for the holy congregations to be held. The Sikhs residing in the neighbouring areas of the city too did not lag behind in offering their obeisance to the Guru as also derive benefit from his sermons. He stayed at Burhanpur twenty days. During this period apart from addressing the Sikhs and non-Sikh devotees, he paid visit to Raj Ghat, a place on the bank of river Tapti associated with Guru Nanak's visit. Custodian of the seminary, Mahatma Jiwan Dass was blessed by the Guru.¹⁷

Guru's growing influence amongst the people of this region was not liked by the Emperor, who after a stay of a day or two had left Burhanpur.

16. *Gur Sobha*, pp. 160-64; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 251-52; Gupta, *Ibid.*, pp. 317-18; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, pp. 333-36.

17. Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 254; Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 1124-26; *Gur Sobha*, p. 164; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, pp. 337-38.

Now he wrote the Guru to join his camp. The Guru being embodiment of transparent sincerity, uprightness and truthfulness, did not doubt the intention of the Emperor and left Burhanpur. On the way, he sojourned at Jainabad, Balapur and Akola. Thereafter he stayed at Banera first and then at Amravati. From here he proceeded to Hingoli. At some distance from this place, he caught up with Bahadur Shah and encamped at a distance of two three miles from the Emperor's camp. Both, Bahadur Shah and the Guru followed route via Malikpur, crossed Ban Ganga on 13th August 1708 CE. In the beginning of September 1708 CE, both halted at Nanded, place of pilgrimage on the bank of river Godawari and about a hundred and fifty miles North-West of Hyderabad.¹⁸

The city of Nanded was originally known as *Nau Nand Dehra*. It is said that nine *rishis* dwelt there in the ancient times. Over the time, it had assumed the status of an important pilgrimage centre. Besides, it was an abode of various *ashrams* of Vaishnavites, Saivites, Langayats, Bhiragis etc. However, the Guru decided to stay here and gave up the idea to accompany Bahadur Shah further more. He set up his own independent *Dehra* outside the city in a colony known as Afzalnagar, called by the Sikhs Abchalnagar (the city Eternal). The land for the said *Dehra* was purchased from Sayyid Sabir Shah Faquir who objected Guru's camp on his land. This happened towards the end of August 1708 CE. However, the Guru spent last days of his earthly life here in all wondrous glow of Sikh ways as it had begun first at Anandpur and later on at Talwandi Sabho, and had been kept a glow all through. In fact, an atmosphere of Anandpur was revived in all its intent and purposes.¹⁹

Any serious reader of the biography of Guru Gobind Singh would naturally like to ask why did the Guru give up the idea of proceeding further with the Emperor? Why did the Guru select this very place for stay? Again, no contemporary source shed any light on these issues. However, circumstantial evidence suggests that Guru has realized the real intention of the Emperor. He had been accompanying him for fifteen months (July 1707 to October 1708). Understandably he was continuing negotiations with the hope that a satisfactory conclusion would soon be reached but in the process he realised that it was far from reality. During this period, Bahadur Shah had shown marked amenability to come under the influence of Muslim

18. *Gur Sobha*, p. 165; Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 1126-27; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 239; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, p. 338.

19. S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, pp. 340-45.

orthodoxy, spearheaded by the *Naqshbandi* and Sayyid of Burhans who were averse to the award of any punishment to Wazir Khan, on of their coterie, or to any settlement between the Khalsa and the Mughal state. Therefore, the Guru thought it prudent to detach himself from the Emperor since no fruitful results were coming forth.²⁰

However, on 3rd September, 1708 CE, the Guru arrived at the seminary at Madho Das Bairagi. A long discourse took place between the Guru and Madho Das who eventually gave way to the command of the Guru. Madho Das handed over the seminary to Hari Das Dakhani and himself accompanied the Guru to his *Dehra*. On 4th September, 1708 CE, early in the morning the bards commenced the recitation of *Sri Asa Dee Vaar*. It followed the exposition of one hymn from *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Then the supplication was submitted and victory ovation was pronounced. *Karah Parsad* was distributed and Madho Das was given twice. To his astonishment, Bhai Daya Singh told, "Sant jee, get ready, you are going to partake *Amrit*." Through his own auspicious hands, the Guru gave him a comb, *Karra* (a steel-bangle) and *Kachera* (underwear). By putting a small turban called *Keski* on his head, from a Bairagi transformed him into a Singh. Adoring *Siri Sahib* (the sword) and holding a spear, he bowed his head to pay obeisance and stood erect in front of the Guru. The Guru administered *Khande-di-Pahul* to Madho Das with his own auspicious hands. His new name given by the Guru was Banda Singh. The Sikhs thundered with the ovation of *Sat Sri Akal*. On 5th October, 1708 CE, Banda Singh was appointed as *Jathedar* of the *Panth* and was asked to proceed towards Punjab.²¹

Bahadur Shah was enraged with the Guru for deputing Banda Singh to the Punjab, obviously to renew the struggle and kill Wazir Khan. Not only this, he was also afraid that the Guru might join the Marathas in their struggle against the Mughals when the Emperor would be busy in warfare against his brother Kam Bakhsh. It was for this reason that though being in a hurry to reach Hyderabad to quell the revolt of his brother, he was staying at Nanded and not leaving the Guru alone. Hari Ram Gupta argue that the Emperor had the mistaken belief that the Guru's death would be fatal blow to his scheme of renewing the revolution in the Punjab by Banda. He therefore entered into a conspiracy with two Pathans deputed by Wazir

20. Grewal, *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98; Gupta, *Ibid.*, p. 320; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, p. 341.

21. Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 1127, 29; *Guru Kian Sakhian*, pp. 196-200.

Khan. Gul Khan who was given the title of Jamshed Khan were prevailed upon to put an end the Guru's life as early as possible. Sainapat states that they paid several visits to the Guru and attended his prayer meetings, evidently to avoid suspicions and to look for a favourable opportunity to attack him. At last one evening when the Guru was enjoying siesta and his attendant Lakha Singh was drowsing, one of the Pathans surreptitiously crept into his tent and stabbed him with a dagger on his left side, a little below the heart. But before he could deal another blow the Guru dispatched him to hell with his sword and his fleeing companion Ata Ullah, was put to death by the Sikhs who heard the commotion and came running to the Guru's tent.²²

In order to keep up his friendly stance, the Emperor immediately sent an expert Jarrah (surgeon) called Cole, an English man. He stitched the wound and applied ointment. Soon, the Guru began to recover under proper care. The Emperor daily sent messenger to inquire after the health of the Guru. The news that the Guru was speedily recovering dismayed him. Now, the Emperor decided to adopt a cunning device frequently used by his father. Hari Ram Gupta holds that he planned to contrive the death of the Guru in such a way that the Emperor's complicity should never come to the surface. The fact that the Emperor ordered on 28th October, 1707, CE. to present a dress of mourning to the son of Jamshed Khan speaks of Bahadur Shah's connivance with the murderer of the Guru. He sent rich presents to the Guru as a token of his pleasure at the Guru's speedy recovery. Knowing his weakness for bows and arrows, he included two strong and hard, beautifully bedecked bows. A clever emissary accompanied by Firoze Khan, the *taluqdar* of the place, was sent to deliver the gifts. His main duty was to see that the Guru himself tried the bows there and then. He was successful in inveigling the Guru to test the quality of the bows. The emissary enquired after Guru's health, praised his courage and condemned Gul Khan's treachery. Placing the gifts before the Guru, he eulogized the bow, as a piece of decoration and not for use as it was too hard for a normal human being to use it. It touched the Guru's heart. He said his Sikhs could wield it. A couple of them tried but failed. The Guru was incensed. He got up and bent the bow. In doing so the stitches of his wound gave way and blood flowed profusely. The wound was sewn again, but it putrefied.

22. *Gur Sobha*, pp. 166-67; Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 1128-29, 38; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 255-59; K.S. Bajwa, *Ibid.*, pp. 207-9; 213-14; Gupta, *Ibid.*, pp. 323-324; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, p.348.

On 7th October, the Guru uttered a spirited; *Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh* to bid his farewell to the Sikhs, whom he liked so much and who loved and adorn him above everything. As the gathered Sikhs fervently responded with *Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh*, the light merged into the supreme light. A pyre was erected. Guru Jee's body was washed, adorned with arms and placed on the pyre, which was ignited. After the recitation of *Kirtan Sohla*, the supplication was presented and *parsad* was distributed. In the seminary, recitation of *Sri Guru Granth* was commenced. On 16th October 1708 CE, the recitation of *Sri Guru Granth* was completed. After the *ardas* (supplication) *Karrah Parsad* was distributed.²³

A day before his heavenly journey commenced, the Sikhs asked, "Maharaj, under whose guidance you are going to leave us? Kindly enlighten us." Satguru spoke very politely, "We have created this Panth with the command of *Sri Akal Purakh*, the God Almighty. He will always be its protector and guard it during the difficulties. I have directly assigned you to Him and he guards the one who seek His protection : Thereafter Guru Jee asked Daya Singh, "Bhai Sikha, go and fetch *Sri Granth Jee*, we have to endow Guruship." In obedience to his order Daya Singh brought *Sri Granth Jee*. The Guru placed five paisa and coconut before it and bowed his head before it. Thereupon, He said to the Sangat, "It is my commandment, own *Sri Granth ji* in my place. He who so acknowledges it, will obtain his reward. The Guru will rescue him. Know this as the truth." Clearly enough, the Guru ended the institution of personal Guruship by declaring *Adi Granth* as the spiritual Guru of the Khalsa after him for all times to come.²⁴

The stay of Guru Gobind Singh at Nanded, no doubt proved fatal to him, was significant in more than one way. It was here that he took two vital decisions of his life and these had far reaching implications. For example, by declaring *Adi Granth* as the Guru Eternal he provided supremacy to the 'divine word' rather than to a living human being of any denomination. This decision of the Guru amounts to human liberation from the clutches of 'priesthood' and 'gurudom' for all times to come. His

23. K.S. Bajwa, *Ibid.*, p. 210; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 259-62; *Gur Sobha*, pp. 168-169; Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 1139; Gupta, *Ibid.*, pp. 324-25; S.S. Gandhi, *Ibid.*, pp. 348-49.

24. *Gur Sobha*, pp. 169-71; Gian Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 1141-42; Koer Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 265; Kesar Singh Chhibber, *Bansavalinama*, (ed.) Piara Singh Padam, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1997, pp. 189-90; *Guru Kian Sakhian*, pp. 2000-2001; K.S. Bajwa, *Ibid.*, p. 210.

decision to appoint Banda Singh as temporal leader of the Khalsa went a long way in moulding the character of the Sikh Movement which finally paved way to the establishment of a Sikh state on the ruins of the tyrannical Mughal state. Already, on the Baisakhi of 1699, he had equated 'the Khalsa' with the Guru, now equating 'the word' with the Guru, he outlived in the ideals of '*Guru Granth*' and '*Guru Panth*'.

GURU GOBIND SINGH'S MISSION AND THE LAST PHASE AT NANDED

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The pontificate of Guru Gobind Singh has been generally regarded as relevant for Sikh polity and political institutions. It is stated by a modern writer that Guru Gobind Singh's aim was to go far beyond the position of Guru Hargobind and to establish a "parallel government"¹ Malcom, an early 19th century British historian, regards Guru Gobind Singh as the founder of political independence of the Sikhs.² According to a modern historian, Guru Gobind Singh infused political consciousness in the Sikhs to knit them together into a national brotherhood to defend the religion and the country.³ All these opinions underline the relevance of Guru Gobind Singh to Sikh polity in one way or another.

There is no general agreement about the nature of achievements of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs (1666-1708). Sir Jadunath Sarkar believes that Guru Gobind Singh transformed the Sikhs into "mere soldiers".⁴ According to Sir Gokul Chand Narang, Guru Gobind Singh added the sentiment of "nationalism" to religion.⁵ A modern Sikh writer believes that Guru Gobind Singh was guided by a truly religious spirit in taking up arms against the Mughal Government in order to dethrone tyrannical rulers who were oppressing his countrymen.⁶

Guru Gobind Singh's father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, was executed in 1675 through the orders of Aurangzeb who had come to adopt an aggressive policy against all non-Muslims as the champion of Suni-Islam. Guru Gobind Singh himself refers to his father's martyrdom in the

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1. Teja Singh, *Essays in Sikhism*, Lahore, 1941, p. 95.

2. *Sketch of the Sikhs*...., London, 1812, p. 75.

3. Ganda Singh, *A Brief Account of the Sikh People*, Patiala, 1956, p. 30.

4. *History of Aurangzeb*, Calcutta, 1928, p. 303.

5. *Transformation of Sikhism*, Lahore, 1946, p. 130.

6. Kartar Singh, *Life of Guru Gobind Singh*, Ludhiana, 1951, p. 62.

following terms : "God protected his *tilk* and *janju* and he performed a memorable act in the *Kalyyuga*, doing so much for the holy men as to give up his life without a groan. He did this for the sake of *dharmā*. He chose to sacrifice his life rather than to betray God."⁷

Guru Gobind Singh did appreciate this great action of his father. "The people of the earth were shocked and stunned but the heavens rejoiced at this victory of the spirit."⁸

This attitude of Guru Gobind Singh is extremely significant because of the fact that he was writing this in 1697-98 on the eve of instituting the *Khalsa*. Whatever Guru Gobind Singh's initial reaction to the death of his father, in due course he came to admire Guru Tegh Bahadur as the supreme defender of "*dharmā*". By now, Guru Gobind Singh himself had a religious objective in mind as the ninth successor to the "*gaddi*" of Guru Nanak Dev. He clearly stated his aim in the "*Bachittar Natak*" — the sole reason why God had sent him to this world was to spread "*dharmā*" and to prevent people from doing evil deeds. In his own words, God directed Guru Gobind Singh thus : "I cherish you as My son and I have created you to extend the *panth*. Go and spread the *dharmā* and restrain people from senseless acts."⁹

The Guru states his aim thus : "For this task have I come to this world, and the Divine Guru has sent me for the sake of *dharmā*, ordering me to spread the faith everywhere and to subdue the evil-doers. I make it clear to the holy men that I have taken birth for this purpose to promulgate *dharmā*, to raise the holy, and to cast out the evil-doers from their very roots."¹⁰

Guru Gobind Singh's aim was to serve the cause of righteousness. In more specific terms, he proposed to protect the sanctified "*gaddi*" of Guru Nanak Dev. His own experience and the experience of his immediate predecessor suggested that there was a real danger of interference from outside. Therefore, his problem was to prepare his followers for meeting aggression from whichever quarter it might come. Though initially he had come into conflict with some of the Rajput chiefs in Punjab hills, his conflict with the representatives of the Mughal Emperor was more serious

7. *Bachittar Natak*, Amritsar, 1968; cf. Max Arthur Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*...., V, p. 295.

8. *Bachittar Natak*, p. 46.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

and potentially more dangerous. After a good deal of thought, therefore, he decided to make the wearing of arms a religious duty for his followers. This was one result of the institution of the *Khalsa*. The claims of conscience had to be defended, if necessary with the force of arms.

The use of arms was not a new thing either for Guru Gobind Singh or his followers even before 1699. Nevertheless, this injunction for the *Khalsa* has to be seen in connection with Guru Gobind Singh's conception of God.

Guru Gobind Singh's objective in instituting the *Khalsa* in 1699 was to re-affirm the faith in Guru Nanak Dev and to meet any challenge of interference presented to the Sikh *panth*. And for this purpose, he wanted to strengthen the Sikh *panth* and to create in them a sense of self-sacrifice in the defence of their conscience. The use of arms did not necessarily imply a political programme.

Guru Gobind Singh did not directly challenge the political authority of either the Rajput Chiefs of the Punjab hills or the Mughal Emperors. But he was not prepared to accept that authority at any cost. If and when the authorities interfered with his own programme, which was primarily religious, he reacted strongly, resorting to arms. He does not appear to have regarded himself as a subject of either the hill chiefs or the Mughals. He was not prepared to identify himself with the contemporary States which, at best, were irrelevant to his programme and, at worst, his antagonists. He refused to compromise with Bahadur Shah on the issue of Anandpur and to reconcile himself to its loss. It is understandable, therefore, that within a year of his death, the *Khalsa* of Guru Gobind Singh rose in arms against the Government of Bahadur Shah. What is more, they established their sovereign power under Banda's leadership. The first Sikh State was born within two years of Guru Gobind Singh's death.

This was made possible also by another development. The "*masands*" had been removed by Guru Gobind Singh through the institution of the *Khalsa* in 1699. Even the earlier Gurus had paid a good deal of regard and consideration to the Sikh "*sangats*" and the idea had gained ground that the "*sangat*" or congregation possessed a special sanctity of its own. The "*Khalsa sangat*", after the removal of the "*masands*" in particular, received much greater consideration from Guru Gobind Singh who ranked the *Khalsa* as the purest form of human society and equated it with his own self. He thought that *Khalsa* was created to crush the enemies of religious growth. His regard for the *Khalsa* is expressed in one of the "*Sawaiyas*".

*I have achieved victory in all the battles against tyranny
 I have fought with the dedicated help of these people...
 From head to foot, whatever I say, belongs to me,
 All that I give away to them.*¹¹

Sainapat puts forth the idea that there was no difference between the “*sangat*” and the “*satguru*”. This gave currency to the idea so well expressed by Bhai Gurdas, the second : “praise to be Gobind Singh who is himself both the Guru and the *Chela*.” This was the context in which Guru Gobind Singh took the momentous decision of abolishing personal “guruship” and vesting it in the *Khalsa*. On Guru Gobind Singh's death, therefore, the *Khalsas* were authorised to take collective decisions. The first vital decision they took was to subvert Mughal authority in Punjab and replace it with their own.

As a matter of fact, by religion he, like his predecessors meant attainment of the true values of life which had a direct bearing on the development of all aspects of man's personality—cultural, political and economic. As it was, the pursuit of ethical values, which was his chief concern, was not conceivable without proper attention to other aspects. That is why we see in these activities his resolve to work for righteousness and his dissatisfaction with each and every degraded sphere of human life.

Though his aims were primarily religious, his activity was not merely religious in the ordinary sense of that word. Though he did not formulate any political programme, his activity did have important political implications. From the use of arms in defence, to rise in arms against an unjust government was only a step. From a refusal to identify with any temporal authority it was not far to think of establishing one's own authority. But all this was to spring from a religious impulse, from the decision to consecrate one's life to the defence of a faith. In the activity of Guru Gobind Singh there was no distinction between the religious and the temporal concerns. For him there were no watertight division between the political, religious and economic aspects of society.

As regards the installation of *Granth Sahib* as the Guru of the Sikhs we have very interesting information to give to the desiderative readers. According to the contemporary source of *Amarnama* written by Dhadi Nath Mal, the contemporary bard of Guru Hargobind's *darbar* who survived upto tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh met Madho Das Bairagi on 3rd September

11. Guru Gobind Singh, *Sawaiyas*.

1708 on the bank of the Godavari and after converting him into his own faith sent him to the Punjab with "Five freedom loving Singhs"¹² to fight against Mughal injustice, tyranny and oppression. Guru Gobind Singh's demise took place on 7th October, which straight way means that it was during this short interval of almost a month that the Guru bestowed Guruship at Nanded to the holy *Granth Sahib*. As per account of Kesar Singh Chhibbar the holy scripture was previously called *Adi-Granth* to differentiate it from the *Dasam Granth*. But after the 10th Guru installed the Holy Scripture as the Guru, it came to be known as *Guru Granth Sahib*.

As a matter of fact, upto almost the first decade of the second half of the 19th century the *Adi Granth* was available in manuscript form only and the copies were duly kept in the safe custody of the disciples or the Sikh religious shrines. The sacred manuscripts pertained to four forms. The very first script or *bir* (volume) was the original edition compiled and edited by Guru Arjan himself and got scribed by Bhai Gurdas said to be lying safe with Sodhis of Kartarpur. The second one was popularly called *Bhai Banno Wali Bir* having taken by *Bhai Banno* from Guru Arjan for its proper binding and taken to his village Mangat. There is a strong tradition that the Guru instructed him to get the binding expedited and not to stay for more than a day at a place. The *bir* was got copied by Bhai Banno. The third one was got scribed by Guru Gobind Singh from the hands of Bhai Mani Singh at Damdama Sahib and included the *bani* of Guru Tegh Bahadur. This is the volume known to have received the status of the living, eternal and visible Guru of the Sikhs. The fourth one called *Baba Dip Singh Wali Bir* was got prepared from the volume of a copy of Bhai Banno's *bir* by comparison with the original one and was finalized by including the holy compositions of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Installation of holy *Granth Sahib* as Guru is an issue which claims uniformity of opinion among Sikh classics as well as among the primary sources. Here we give some significant statements pertaining to the last injunction of Guru Gobind Singh regarding the succession of Guruship. Sainapat, the court poet of Guru Gobind Singh states :

*Khalsa khas kahave soi ja ke hirde bharam na hoi
bharam bhekh te rahe niara so khalsa satgur hamara*

12. Kavita, R., *Amarnama : A Perspective* (Last phase of Guru Gobind Singh's Life), Patiala, 2008, p. 39. Exact words in the *Amarnama* are 'Panj, Singhan-e-Azad-mard'.

satgur hamara apar apara sabad bechara ajar jar;

*hirde dhar dhiani uchari bani pad nirbani.*¹³

Bhatt Vahi Bhadson Pargana Thanesar holds :

*Guru Gobind Singh Ji mahal dasma beta Tegh Bahadur Ji ka pota
Guru Hargobind ji ka padpota Guru Arjan ji ka bans Guru Ram Das ji ka
Suraj bansi Anandpur Pargana Kailur mukam Nanded Godavari Des
Deccan Samvat satran sau pensath katak maas ki chauth sakal pakhan
Budhuvar ke dehun... sarbat sangat se kaha mera hukam hai meri jaga Sri
Granthji ko (Guru) janana; jo Sikh jaanega tis ki ghal thaen paegi...*¹⁴

Koer Singh writing in 1751 A.D. states in his *Gurbilas Patshahi Das*:

*Gureai ka nahe ab kaal tilk na devege kis bhal... lad pakdae sabad
ka rup jo mane sau singh anup darsan Gur ka hai savdhan Sri Granthji
Sahib maan.*¹⁵

Kesar Singh Chhibbar, the author of *Bansavalinama*... writing in 1769 A.D. pleads :

*Dasvan patshah gaddi Gureai ki Granth Sahib nun de gaia. Ajj
partakh Guru asada Granth Sahib hai. Soi gia jo granthon gia.*¹⁶

Last but not the least Guru Gobind Singh's achievements in all fields of life were par excellence. He struggled hard throughout his life for the cause of righteousness and for stopping tyranny and injustice. He had a religious mission lying at the core of his heart. He installed the holy *Granth* as the living, visible and eternal Guru of the Sikhs for all the times to come.

13. Sainapat, *Sri Gur Sobha*, Patiala, 1967, pp. 128-29.

14. Bhat Vahi Bhadson Pargana Thanesar, Extracts in Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala.

15. Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshahi Das*, Patiala, 1968, pp. 130, 28-84.

16. Kesar Singh Chhibbar, (ms.) *Bansavalinama Dasan Patshahian Ka*, No.103, S.H.R., Khalsa College, Amritsar.

CHHOTA GHALLUGHARA

Dalbir Singh*

Zakariya Khan died on July, 1745, leaving behind his three sons: Yahiya Khan, Shah Nawaz Khan and Mir Baqi.¹ After the death of Zakariya Khan there was a war of succession between the two sons Yahiya Khan and Shah Nawaz Khan.² This period of six months, when the rulers of the Punjab were engaged in their mutual, petty disputes, was a godsent opportunity for the Sikhs. Even during the life time of Khan Bahadur, several *Jathas* of the Sikhs had concentrated in Amritsar and then after his death thousands of the Sikhs had appeared in the Majha.³ These strong forces formed themselves into units of one hundred each and retread themselves all over the land, engaging extensive depredations. Taking advantage of the interval quarrels of their enemies, the Sikhs reaped a rich harvest of booty. They roamed all over the country and plundered the government treasures and punished the informers of the government.⁴

It is to be noted here that the death of Zakariya Khan resulted in disorder and confusion throughout the Punjab because his successor was not appointed immediately. This was followed by slackening administrative control and chaos in the Punjab, due to a rapid change of rulers. This was an opportune time for the Sikhs to assert their powerful claim to finish the Mughal sovereignty in the province of the Punjab. In this situation the Sikhs took a full advantage of the confused state of affairs and a new development now took place in the organization of the Sikhs. They assembled at Amritsar, on 14 October, 1745

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1. Tahmas Khan Miskeen, *Tahmasnama*, (N.P.) 1782, translated in English by P. Setu Madahwa Rao, Bombay, 1967, p. 7; Bakhat Mal, *Khalsanama*, (N.P.), 1810-14, translated in Punjabi by Janak Singh, M.S., available in the Department of Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 27; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash*, (N.P.), 1865, edited by Bhai Vir Singh, Amritsar, 1982, pp. 299-300.
2. Ali-ud-din Mufti, *Ibratnama*, (N.P.), 1854, M.S. available in the Department of Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 217.
3. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 300-301.
4. Malcolm, *Sketch of the Sikhs*, London, 1812, pp. 89-90.

on the occasion of Diwali and passed *Gurmata* to organize themselves into a new body.⁵

At last the quarrel between the two brothers Yahiya Khan and Shah Nawaz Khan was over and the Mughal emperor Mohammad Shah agreed to appoint Yahiya Khan as the governor of Lahore and Shah Nawaz Khan as the governor of Multan. Yahiya Khan had no soft corner in his heart for the Sikhs. He renewed the activities against the Sikhs.⁶

In one evening of January, 1746 a Sikh *Jatha* entered in the city of Lahore and plunder the government treasures.⁷ At this time the Mughal forces came to fight the Sikhs but the Sikhs had taken shelter in the jungle on the bank of river Ravi. Yahiya Khan sent his *Diwan* Lakhpat Rai at the head of large force with the order not to return back without driving out the Sikhs from the territory. At that time the Sikhs abandoned the shelter of the river Ravi and proceeded to Eminabad and Lakhpat Rai returned to Lahore.⁸ At that time the murder of Jaspat Rai, the *Faujdar* of Eminabad (brother of Lakhpat Rai) at the hands of the Sikhs aggravated the situation for them much more than the facts of the case warranted. A party of the Sikhs (Ali-ud-din Mufti put their numbers 2000) had gone to visit *Rori Baba Nanak* at Eminabad.⁹ A letter was also sent to the *Faujdar* of Eminabad by the government of Lahore to throw out the Sikhs from his territory. When the *Faujdar* of Eminabad Jaspat Rai, came to know of the arrival of 2000 Sikhs in *Rori Sahib* (Eminabad), he sent them a strict order to clear out immediately from his territory. The Sikhs replied that they would eat, and rest for a night and would leave immediately next morning.¹⁰ But Jaspat Rai was not prepared to show them any lenience. He ordered the army to attack the Sikhs. In such a situation the Sikhs did not wish to fight, but this fight had been forced upon them and they drew their swords. The bloody battle took place at *Baddo Ki Gosian* in February – March, 1746. Jaspat Rai was killed in the battlefield.¹¹

5. Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, (N.P), 1880. Reprinted by Language Department Punjab, Patiala, 1970, pp. 771-73.

6. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 302-303; Kanahiya Lal, *Tarikh-i-Punjab*, (N.P), 1881, translated by Jit Singh Sital, Patiala, 1968, p. 63.

7. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 303-304.

8. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 304-305.

9. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op.cit.*, p. 217; Kanahiya Lal, *op.cit.*, p. 63.

10. Ali-ud-Din Mufti, *op.cit.*, pp. 217-218.

11. Khushwaqat Rai, (NP), 1811, Translated by Milkhi Ram. MS available in the Department of Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 63; Ali-ud-din Mufti, *op.cit.*, p. 218; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, p. 305; Kanahiya Lal, *op.cit.*, p. 63; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 773-775.

When Diwan Lakhpat Rai heard about the death of his brother, he was furious and in a fit of anger, he took vow that he would redeem his honour of being the son of a *Kashatriya*, by annihilating the Sikhs and that he would rest only after he had put an end to the entire Sikh community.¹² The Sikhs holding the government jobs, or living in Lahore were arrested immediately. He obtained an order from the governor for a general massacre of the Sikhs. According to which the Sikhs were shoot at sight. Any one who professes to be a follower of *Guru Gobind Singh* should be given a short shrift, there will be a reward for head of the Sikhs. By the beat of Drum Lakhpat Rai ordered a general announcement to be made in the whole province that no one would mention the name of any Sikh *Guru* and nobody allowed to read "*Guru Granth Sahib*". The word "*Pothi*" is to be used to signify the book at that time and not the word "*Granth*" since the later word suggests the holy book of the Sikhs.¹³ The use of the word "*Gur*" a sweet solid preparation of the juice of sugar cane, is to be discovered in favour of "*Rori* or *Bheli*" since the word "*Gur*" has some phonetic affinity with the word "*Guru*". The word "*Wahi Guru*" is made taboo and those guilty of defiance of these order are to be beheaded or forced to be converted to Islam. The sacred books of the Sikhs were burnt and their *Gurudwaras* pulled down. When the Diwan complained about this to the viceroy Yahiya Khan, he obliged by getting all the Sikhs in Lahore arrested and executed on March 10, 1746.¹⁴

In such an unfavourable situation the general body of the Sikhs had taken shelter in the swamps of the upper course of the river Ravi. Simultaneously a huge force, consisting of Mughal troops and auxiliaries drawn from all over the country, marched against the Sikhs under the personal command of Yahiya Khan and Lakhpat Rai. Lakhpat Rai and the *Chaudhris* of the areas with their fighting men were also with them.¹⁵ In such a situation the Sikhs, about 15,000 in number, had taken shelter in the forests of *Kahnuwan*¹⁶ on the right bank of the old Beas river (15 kilometers south of *Gurdaspur*), which were inaccessible to the heavy-clothed troopers and their

12. Khushwaqat Rai, *op.cit.*, pp. 63-64; Ali-ud-din Mufti, *op.cit.*, p. 218; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 305-306; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 775-776.

13. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 306-307; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 777-778.

14. Khushwaqat Rai, *op.cit.*, p. 64; Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 308-309; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 778.

15. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 309-10; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 778-779.

16. Ganda Singh and Teja Singh, *Short History of the Sikhs*, 1989, Patiala, p. 124.

artillery. A way was, however cut through for the movement of the army and with the help of the guns. Soon the state army laid a siege and set fire to the *Jungle* of Kahnuwan.¹⁷ The Sikhs were pushed out towards the river Ravi at that time, which they crossed and moved towards Parol and Kathua. Lakhpat was close on their heels. The only course left for them was to take to the hills of Basohli, where they expected help from the Hindu population. But they were soon disillusioned to find that orders had already reached from Lahore not to give any quarter to them. The Sikhs were received with showers of bullets and stones and were obliged to cry a halt. Now the situation was desperate. They had steep hills in front, with a hostile population pouring death on them; a flooded river to the right and the enemy in hot pursuit behind. They had no ammunition, no food and no ally and their horses too being weak, were tumbling into mountain-clefts and ravines.¹⁸ It was impossible for them to fight with the enemy in such a situation. They decided to retrace their steps and go to Majha. But the Ravi being in spate was unfordable. Two brothers Gurdial Singh and Hardial Singh of *Dallewal* jumped into the river to see from where it could be crossed. They jumped into the river but did not return. Those who climbed the mountains were caught by the Rajput soldiers who were on guard duty and were killed.¹⁹

At that time the Mughal force waited for the hidden Sikhs to come out from their hidden places and they were fully equipped with cannons and other weapons to shoot them down. At this time the Sikh leaders decided that they would suddenly make a dash in one direction leading the Mughal forces to believe that they were fleeing. As they followed the Sikhs suddenly reverse their positions, pounce upon the advancing Mughals and deprive them of their horses, weapons, rations etc. and run into the forests for the shelter. When Lakhpat Rai came to know about the plans of the Sikhs, he intensified the attack with a barrage gun fire. As the Sikhs tried to go up the mountains to escape the volley of fire at that time the Mughal army opened fire thus blocking their way.²⁰

17. According to Khushwaqat Rai, "the place where the Sikhs were surrounded by the Mughals known as "Atiya Nagar" But Ali-ud-Din Mufti, mention that place known as Bahhu, in Jammu District. Khushwaqat Rai, *op.cit.*, p. 64; Ali-ud-din Mufti, *op.cit.*, p. 218.

18. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 310-313; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 778-780.

19. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 313-314.

20. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 314-315.

In their predicament, the Sikh Sardars decided that those on foot should try their luck towards the hills and others who had horses should cut their way through the enemy and follow any direction which they could take. Prominent among them were: Hari Singh *Bhangi*, Bhima Singh *Bhangi*, Chajja Singh *Bhangi*, Sukha Singh, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Tara Singh, Charat Singh, Deep Singh, Sudha Singh, Aggar Singh, Dargaha Singh, Daljeet Singh, Gurbakhsh Singh, Sham Singh, Hira Singh, Dharam Singh, Karm Singh and Sher Singh.²¹

At that time the cannons were set straight in the directions of the Sikhs' hideouts by the state army. Scouts and military contingents roamed about in search of them, killing every Sikh they came across. Diwan Lakhpat Rai ordered to his forces that instead of engaging themselves in looting and plundering, they should lead a determined all out attack to exterminate every Sikh wherever they could find one. He offered cash prize of rupees fifty for the head of the Sikhs.²² To save themselves from the Mughals, some of them moved towards direction of the river Beas, which flowed at a distance of about 30 kilometers, fighting their way valiantly against their pursuers. A vivid picture was presented by Rattan Singh *Bhangu*. He says that when the Sikhs reached at Beas, Lakhpat Rai over took them. At this time the river was flooded and the enemy was in hot pursuit. No boats were available to cross the river. At that time the Sikhs jumped into the river at Goindwal. When they reached the opposite bank of the river, they came upon a deep bed of sand 3 kilometers lying. They were already dying of hunger and fatigue and the pain of their wounds and now the burning sand added to their torture. They tore out their turbans, tied the pieces to their feet and thus managed to cross it and reached in the Jullundur Doab. In the Jullundur -Doab they halted near village. They had hardly begun to cook their food when Adena Beg Khan suddenly fell upon them. They also received the news of Lakhpat Rai having crossed the river Beas. So they started fighting and piercing through Adena Beg's troops and reached the river Satluj.²³ Having crossed it at Tihara and applying cold water compresses on the way, they arrived in Malwa with great difficulty, while Lakhpat Rai returned to Lahore.²⁴ Those who went to the hills were able to spend about

21. Rattan Singh *Bhangu*, *op.cit.*, pp. 314-316; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 781-782.

22. Rattan Singh *Bhangu*, *op.cit.*, pp. 316-18; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 782-83.

23. Rattan Singh *Bhangu*, *op.cit.*, pp. 318-319; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 788.

24. Rattan Singh *Bhangu*, *op.cit.*, p. 319; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, pp. 788-89.

six months in different parts of Mandi and Kullu, where they had to contend with great hardships and then they rejoined the *Khalsa* at Kiratpur.²⁵ The Mughal soldiers were still pursuing the Sikhs. In this bloody fight at least seven thousand Sikhs were killed. Some of three thousand of them were caught by the Mughals. They were made prisoners and sent to Lahore where they were beheaded at *Nakhas*. Their heads were piled up to make pyramids and their bodies buried under the walls of the Mosque.²⁶

"Rattan Singh Bhangu says that, "the number of the Sikh peoples who were killed in the battle of Kahnawan was near about 40,000." It may be the total number of the Sikhs who were killed in the battle field and after the battle who were brought as prisoners and tortured to death at Lahore. But Khushwaqat Rai says that the number of the Sikhs who were killed by the Mughals were 4000. Giani Gian Singh also mentions that the number of the Sikhs who were killed in the battle field were near 7000.²⁷

This happened in May-June, 1746. It was the first time when the Sikhs had suffered so much loss of life in a single battle. It was therefore called the *Ghallughara* (the Holocaust). But sixteen years later in 1762, they had to suffer a worse disaster at the hands of Ahmad Shah Abdali, the Afghan conqueror. This incident therefore, later came to be known as first *Ghallughara* (the first Holocaust) in the history of the Sikhs.²⁸

25. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 320-321; Ganda Singh and Teja Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 128-129.

26. Ganda Singh and Teja Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 129.

27. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 320-322; Kanahiya Lal, *op.cit.*, p. 63; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, p. 790.

28. Rattan Singh Bhangu, *op.cit.*, pp. 321-322; Giani Gian Singh, *Panth Parkash*, *op.cit.*, pp. 788-90; Ganda Singh and Teja Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 129.

SIKHS : SAINT SOLDIERS WITH ETHICS

Mrs. Sonu Kapila*

The term 'martial race' was coined during British rule to classify Indian population on the basis of 'martial and non-martial' traits to facilitate the recruitment of such races to the British army. They included Marathas, Gurkhas, Sikhs and Garhwalis termed as races having martial qualities. Before analyzing the problem, to define 'martial race', according to *'Reader's Digest - Great Encyclopaedic Dictionary'*, the word 'martial' means 'of, suitable for, appropriate to warfare; militant race eager to fight' and hence martial race is a race 'eager to fight', 'militant race'.

Martial races are not born. In fact different races are affected by terrain, climatic factors,¹ circumstances, contact with other races and some cultural patterns (in case of Sikhs considered to be martial race, coming of Jats was a major factor and vice-versa).² Similarly, the Marathas and Gurkhas as martial races had to face tough geographical conditions still they carved their own empires and gave a tough fight to the British. Constant invasions also affect the physical and psychological response of the people. For example, there was a famous saying in Punjab—"ਖਾਧਾ ਪੀਤਾ ਲਾਹੇ ਦਾ, ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਅਹਿਮਦ ਸ਼ਾਹੇ ਦਾ" or when the Sikhs were facing Mughal atrocities the people use to say, "ਮਨੂੰ ਅਸਾਡੀ ਦਾਤਰੀ, ਅਸੀਂ ਮਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਸੋਏ, ਜਿਉਂ-ਜਿਉਂ ਮਨੂੰ ਅਸਾਨੂੰ ਵੱਢਦਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਦੂਣ-ਸਵਾਏ ਹੋਏ"।

British used the term 'martial race' in Indian context to recruit martial races in British army. It was not correct to term any race martial without analyzing the causes which led to the development of such qualities in a race. Initially, British East India Company conquered India with the help of Indian troops. The Bengal army recruited from 'Purbias', men of Bihar and Awadh was main instrument forged by the company for their conquest in the north right upto the annexation of the Punjab in 1849. This army was thereafter sidelined after the revolt of 1857. From then onwards the Punjabis replaced the 'Purbias' as the main force of British army. Some classes of Punjab were

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1. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol.18, p.986.

2. *Evolution of Khalsa* - Vol. II, Indu Bhushan Bannerjee, p.35.

called martial races, the Sikhs, Pathans, Dogras, Haryanvis and Muslim Jats and British praised these classes for their "loyalty" to the British rulers.

Were these races loyal to the British is a different question. In fact, Sikh and Punjabi sepoys were not totally calm during 1857 revolt. It were only the Sikh Rajas of Punjab who helped the British but then many non-Sikh Rajas had participated in the revolt, so, as a community Sikhs were not loyal to the British. Moreover, the Purbia sepoys who were large in number in Punjab at the time of mutiny also did not fully revolt against the British.³ Soon the Sikhs were to participate in 1907 agitation, where troops refused to fire on Lala Lajpat Rai at Rawalpindi. The Gadar movement was inspired by Punjabis and there were revolts by Punjabis in the British army. Thus, now the so called "loyalty" which was made basis of martial classes, stands dismissed after 1857.

Sikhs and Concept of Martial Race

There has been evolution of Sikhism and during this process Sikhism responded to the circumstances and following factors are important in analyzing the concept of martial race and Sikhism.

i) The Jat factor

Jats adopted Sikhism in large numbers and Guru Hargobind adopted Miri-Piri to accommodate these people who were having courage and fortitude. "The Jat in every respect the most important of the Punjab peoples. In point of numbers he surpasses the Rajput who comes next to him...Politically he ruled the Punjab till the Khalsa yielded to our arms...and from an economical and administrative point of view he is the husbandman, the peasant, the revenue payer par excellence of the province. His manners do not bear the impress of generations of wild freedom which marks the races of our frontier mountains. But he is more honest, more industrious, more sturdy, and no less manly than they...The Jat is of all Punjab races the most impatient of tribal or communal control, and the one which asserts the freedom of the individual most strongly."⁴ Similarly, about the Jats it has been remarked that they were prone to 'tribal freedom and kinship',⁵ Jats are 'habitual plunderers',⁶ and 'fighters par excellence'.⁷ With the coming of Jats, Sikhism underwent a transformation to accommodate the 'warlike' Jats.

3. *The Punjab under the Lawrences*, N. M. Khilnani, p.146.

4. *Panjab Castes*, Denzil Ibbetson, p.102.

5. *Evolution of Khalsa - Vol.II*, Indu Bhushan Bannerjee, p.36.

6. *Ibid.*, p.41.

7. *Ibid.*, p.42.

ii) Evolution of Sikhism - Miri Piri of Guru Hargobind

Guru Hargobind resorted to militant policy by guiding his followers for both military and spiritual upliftment. It was an answer to Mughal fanaticism. Jats were recruited in large numbers to Sikhism. It is said, 'Scratch the Sikh and you will find the Jat'. Questions were raised regarding the new policy. But the Guru was only upholding the ideals of earlier Gurus. Guru Hargobind appears to have been a misunderstood man,⁸ even by his followers as Sikhism stands most misunderstood religion if historical context is not seen because this is a movement that developed according to the changing internal and external factors.

iii) Creation of Khalsa

Creation of Khalsa or the new baptism was another turning point that called upon the Khalsa to meet the challenges of disloyalty of masands as well as to implement equality in Sikhism by abolishing the caste system, to put an end to difference between the Guru and the follower and to create a brotherhood of men. Sword became an object of worship for the Sikhs 'whoever desired to abide in the Khalsa should not fear the clash of arms, and be ever ready for the combat and defence of his faith.'⁹

iv) Saint soldiers - soldiers with ethics

Ethics means morality or good conduct, values that lead to morality. Without these, quality of life cannot improve. There are spiritual, social, economic and political ethics in Sikhism for the upliftment of life of a Sikh. Sikhism believes in divine justice and the morality of the world order. Evil will ultimately fall, though it may often seem to succeed for a while. Due to the policies of Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh, Sikhs faced the Mughal tyranny but they never forgot their ultimate aim— to reach the God by constantly following the right path, path of purity, truth, morality, honesty, righteousness, non-violence, good company and humility. 'A Sikh is necessarily a soldier and a warrior. If he is not busy for the sake of Dharma in the battle against a tyrant, he is busy in warfare on another plane. He is an invincible warrior with an armour of humility, riding on the path of God, moving fearlessly among forces of the enemy, conquering the whole world after bringing the five vices under control. He has to become not only master of physical culture, but also a specialist of moral and spiritual cultures. In his struggle against the evil forces, he has not to take up arms immediately, but

8. *Ibid.*, p.31.

9. *The Sikh Religion*, Macauliffe - Vol.V, p.223.

should try to bring the vicious opponents on the right path, but if all his attempts at reconciliation fail, it will be reasonable on his part to take out his sword and come in the open battlefield for the protection of Dharma.¹⁰

Truth is higher than everything else;
but higher by far is the truthful living.
ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ॥¹¹

Who ever controls the mind, he is a Haji-
ਜੋ ਦਿਲ ਸੋਧੈ ਸੋਈ ਹਾਜੀ¹²

O Nanak, consider that person as spiritually wise, who does not threaten anybody nor get threatened by anyone.

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ¹³

Stress on good company is laid in *Adi Granth*—

ਉਤਮ ਸੰਗਤ ਉਤਮ ਹੋਵੇ। ਗੁਣ ਕਉ ਧਾਵੈ ਅਵਗੁਣ ਧੋਵੇ।¹⁴

One should not feel proud 'homai' because it is said that they are always in misery because they act in the obstinacy of their mind. They do not attain contentment and do not love the truth.

ਮਨਹਨ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਂਵਦੇ ਨਿਤ ਨਿਤ ਹੋਰਿ ਖੁਆਰ ।
ਅੰਤਰ ਸਾਂਤਿ ਨ ਆਵਾਈ ਨਾ ਸਚ ਲਗੈ ਪਆਰ ।¹⁵

v) Martial for enemies and saints for friends

Another important feature of Sikh history is that Sikhs have resorted to weapons only when enemies have gone to the extreme. Peace is the sole message of sacred book of the Sikhs - *The Adi Granth*, welfare of humanity through institutions of *sangat* and *pangat* was the message of Guru Nanak and these two institutions were very close to the heart of Guru Gobind Singh too. *Deg* and *Teg* symbolize the balance of objectives of Sikhism.

A resting place at the divine portal can be found only through the devoted service of the people in this world.

ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ਤਾਂ ਦਰਗਾਹਿ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ।¹⁶

Such teachings must have had effect on Jat people who embraced Sikhism inspite of all their fighting and tribal traits. 'Indeed, it has been stressed by several writers that change of religion hardly effects much change in the

10. *Sikh Ethics*, Surindar Singh Kohli, p.58.

11. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p.62.

12. *Ibid.*, p.1084.

13. *Ibid.*, p.1427.

14. *Ibid.*, p.414.

15. *Ibid.*, p.66.

16. *Ibid.*, p.26.

character of these people.¹⁷ No doubt, basic traits of a race remain same but it is a doubtful proposition that a message as powerful as that of *Adi Granth* did not have any effect on the people adopting them. Here Jats are being referred and Jats as part of Sikhism took up arms against wicked and oppressor, not against peaceful citizens or unarmed people. They were on the side of Truth - the Almighty.

Whoever is kind to other beings

The Lord receives him with kindness.

ਦੁੱਖ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਿਸੈ ਜੀਅ ਪਤ ਸਿਉ ਘਰ ਜਾਵਉ।¹⁸

vi) Instances when Sikhs resorted to weapons

Thus it is not martial aspect but it is the question that to which side you belong? To the side of truth or wickedness. Study of history of Sikhs shows that whenever they took to arms they did it to protect their religion, essence of the teachings of Gurus and Sikh ethics. Good Karmas are stressed upon in Sikhism. Good actions not only bring the appreciation in this world but also in the presence of the Lord.

ਸੋਈ ਕੰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ਜਿਤ ਮੁਖ ਉਜਲਾ¹⁹

ਆਪੇ ਬੀਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਖਾਹੁ²⁰

Thus, the Sikhs inspite of all odds sacrificed their lives for humanity but never committed atrocities on unarmed and helpless people.

vii) Sikh ethics teach that a Sikh should strive to be God like

A Sikh has to inculcate God like qualities, then only he can achieve the grace of God. In *Mulmantra*, according to Guru Nanak God is fearless and devoid of enmity. These two attributes can be practiced by man. Therefore, in order to be in-tune with Infinite, it is necessary for a man to be fearless and devoid of enmity. Similarly, God is bountiful. A saint who is busy in His devotion and service of humanity, while preaching ethical values asks the Lord to empower him to earn sufficient commodities for daily life since any worry of this type stands in the way of 'Bhakti'. God is gracious, individual should seek his grace. *Karma* (good conduct) is important in Sikhism. Sikhism is a close combination of ethics and theology. Maharaja Ranjit Singh called himself as 'Sarkar-i-Khalsa' in the name of Khalsa.

Historically speaking, Sikhs were never eager to fight or be militant without reason or provocation. Whenever they resorted to arms, they were

17. *Evolution of Khalsa* - Vol. II, p.43.

18. *Guru Granth Sahib*, p.322.

19. *Ibid.*, p.397.

20. *Japuji*, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਰਪਣ, ਪੋਥੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ, ਡਾ. ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ ਟੀਕਾਕਾਰ, p.88.

provoked by the rulers and the circumstances of the day. As a race, Sikhs had been taught very high values of life and ethics by the Gurus. Their main aim was to attain the Supreme Bliss by practising equality of men, honesty, forsake lust, anger and slander, revoke ego, not to be proud, be truthful, piety and purity. British attached the concept of 'martial race' to Sikhs for their own objectives, to create wedge between Sikhs and Hindustanis and this approach benefited them a lot as Sikhs entered into their services in large numbers but in the long run it attached an epithet of 'militancy' to the community leading to undermining of other humane qualities of the sect but such qualities and ethics are the gist of Sikhism. To term a community as martial for colonial pursuits was a planned policy of the British to divide and rule the Indian people for their own interests.

MILITARY ORGANIZATION OF THE 18TH CENTURY SIKHS

Gurkiran Grewal*

The eighteenth century Sikh history is full of Sikh-Mughal-Afghan conflict. All the three powers led the struggle for holding control over Punjab. For Mughals and Afghans, Punjab being important due to its geographical situation as well as economic prosperity. As for the Sikhs it was their motherland and they wanted to free it from the tyrant rule of Mughals. During this period the Sikh forces were led by Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, who played an important role being commander-in-chief of Sikh forces. One important work which deals with life of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, founder of Ahluwalia misl is Ram Sukh Rao's¹ '*Jassa Singh Singh Binod*'. This text is a detailed account of life and career of Jassa Singh. It comprised of 250 folios - of which 200 folios are devoted to the political career of Jassa Singh. By studying this text one gathers much valuable information about the then prevailing military system of the Sikhs.

The Eighteenth century Sikh struggle against the Mughals and Afghans, the prevailing military system had a crucial role to play. The Sikh military system was more or less the same as that of Mughals and Marathas. Their varieties might differ from one another merely in details but not the basic principles.² In this text, Jassa Singh is referred as 'Panth ke Malik' leading the struggle of Sikh forces against Mughals and Afghan invaders.³ He is said to be conquering the country by the orders of the Guru.⁴ Therefore, he turned down the offer of a job under Adina Beg Khan.⁵ When Kaura Mal brought the offer of *jagir* from Subedar of Lahore, Jassa Singh again refused.⁶

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1. Ram Sukh Rao, the author has written the historical works on Ahluwalia Chiefs, Jassa Singh, Bagh Singh & Fateh Singh. These are entitled in '*Sri Jassa Singh Singh Binod*, MS/772, *Sri Bagh Singh Chandauryday* MS/773, and *Sri Fateh Singh Partap Prabhakan*, MS/774 respectively.
2. Fauja Singh Bajwa, *Military System of the Sikhs*, p.1
3. Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Singh Binod*. ff 76a-b, 125a, 226a and 230a.
4. *Ibid.*, f 64b : ਅਰੁ ਗੁਰਾਂ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਸੇ ਮੁਲਖਗੀਰੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਫਿਰਤੇ ਹਾਂ।
5. *Ibid.*, f 71a.
6. *Ibid.*, f 72b : ਤੇ ਕੌੜਾ ਮੱਲ ਨੇ ਜਾਹਰ ਕਰਿਆ ਜੋ ਜਾਗੀਰ ਲਈਏ ਤੇ ਨਵਾਬ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਰਫੀਕ ਹੂ ਜੀਏ॥ ਤੇ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਬਾਤ ਨਾ ਮਾਨੀ॥

Jassa Singh's exploits throw light on the military organization of the Sikhs during this period. In the first half of 18th century, the Sikh forces were divided into *deras* (small groups), which appear to have been voluntary associations organised along a clan or locality basis. The leaders were marked by their values.⁷ The *deras* were constantly on the move due to the pressure of the Mughals and the Afghans.⁸ The Sikh army (*fauji*) consisted of infantry, cavalry and Artillery. The infantry (foot soldiers) was used in realizing tribute and taxes. It also carried the loot and performed garrison and sentry duties.⁹ There was presence of detachment of Akalis also. The cavalry formed the most important and major part of the army. Every foot soldier tried his utmost to join the cavalry after procuring a horse. Many a times the tribute from the conquered villages and *mu'amlā* was collected in the form of horses and the horses were distributed among the soldiers. Some of the foot soldiers in the *dera* were also granted horses.¹⁰ Artillery wing of the Sikh army was almost negligible. From Ram Sukh Rao's account, it appears that the guns and swivels were employed in the second half of the 18th century but to the siege of forts, the guns were employed in last quarter of the century. The use of guns and swivels was made by the Sikhs in well contested battle of Nurmahal (Sammat, 1829), battle of Dinpur (Sammat 1838) and in siege of Sultanpur Lodhi and Mianwind (Sammat 1832).¹¹

The text also throws light on the use of weapons made by the Sikhs in the war. They were bows, arrows, neje, talwar, shamsheer, badukhan, jajail, zamburak, top, top-halat and sisa. The author praises Jassa Singh for his archery¹² & Sikhs for their excellent shorts.¹³

7. *Ibid.*, f 200b : ਜੋ ਜੋਨਸਾ ਬਡਾ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹੋਵੇ ਸੋ ਹਮਲੇ ਦਰਮਿਆਨ ਭੀ ਆਗੇ ਹੋਵੇ ਸਭ ਸੈ॥ ਤੇ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਭੀ ਆਪ ਕਰੇ॥

8. *Ibid.*, f 58a : ਅਰੁ ਈਆ ਕੀਆਂ ਬੀ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਫੌਜਾਂ ਸੀਆਂ॥ ਤੇ ਵਿਲਾਇਤ ਕੀ ਤਰਫੋਂ ਭੀ ਆਵਤੀਆਂ ਸੀਆਂ। ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਜੀ ਕੇ ਸਾਥ॥ ਏਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਕਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਚੋਕਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ।

9. *Ibid.*, f 108a : ਡੇਰੇ ਮੈ ਪਿਆਦੇ ਤੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਵਾਫਰ ਹੈ॥ ਤੇ ਉਨ ਪਾਸ ਮੁਲਕ ਕੀ ਲੂਟ ਵਾਫਰ ਹੈ॥ ਭਾਰ ਬਰਦਾਰੀ ਸੈਂ ਭੀ ਤੰਗ ਹੈ॥

10. *Ibid.*, f 75b : ਤਾਂ ਆਪ ਨੇ ਆਦਮੀ ਭੇਜੇ॥ ਜੋ ਸਭ ਗਾਂਵ ਨਜਰੋਂ ਕੇ ਤਾਂ ਘੋੜੇ ਲਿਆਵਾਂਗੇ ਹੀ। ਪਰ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਕੇ ਟਕਿਆਂ ਮੈਂ ਭੀ ਘੋੜੇ ਹੀ ਲਿਆਵੇ॥ ਤਾਂ ਸਭ ਮਾਲਵੇ ਯਨੇ ਜੰਗਲ ਕੇ ਗਾਵਾਂ ਸੇ ਘੋੜੇ ਨਜਰੋਂ ਕੇ ਅਰੁ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਮੈ ਭੀ ਵਾਫਰ ਲਿਆਵੇ॥ ਤਾਂ ਸਰਦਾਰੋਂ ਕੋ ਭੀ ਦੀਏ॥ ਅਰੁ ਵਾਫਰ ਫੌਜ ਕੋ ਭੀ ਬਖਸੇ॥ ਤੇ ਕਈ ਜੋ ਡੇਰੇ ਮੈ ਪਿਆਦੇ ਫਿਰਤੇ ਸੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ ਕੋ ਭੀ ਇਨਾਇਤ ਹੂਏ॥

11. *Ibid.*, ff 209a, 213a, 234ab and 225a.

12. *Ibid.*, f 79ba : ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਕੇ ਤੀਰਾਂ ਕੀ ਆਗੇ ਭੀ ਮਸਾਹੂਰੀ ਸੀ॥ ਜੋ ਜਿਸਕੋ ਲੜਾਈ ਮੈ ਲਾਗਤਾ ਸਾ॥ ਉਹ ਉਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਰਹਿਤਾ ਸਾ॥

13. *Ibid.*, f 132a : ਅਰੁ ਬੰਦੂਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਸਰਤ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਕੋ ਬੇਸ ਸੀ॥ ਤੇ ਦੂਰ ਸੋਂ ਭੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੇ ਚੁਕਤੇ॥ ਅਰੁ ਨਜਦੀਕੀਆਂ ਬੰਦੂਖਾਂ ਭੀ ਬਡੀ ਜਲਦੀ ਸੈਂ ਕੌਤਾ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਕੇ ਅਰਸੇ ਸੈਂ ਚਲਾਵਤ ਸੇ॥

Recruitment in the Sikh forces was entirely voluntary. In the beginning army of the Sikhs was very limited.¹⁴ Later, through loot and plunder the economical and numerical strength of the Sikhs was increasing day by day.¹⁵ It seems that those who had been oppressed by the revenue officers, thieves, highway robbers and dacoits and also from plundering of Afghan invaders, joined the Sikh bands in their struggle against tyrant rule.¹⁶ Even large number of youngmen mainly the sons of the zamindars were joining the Dal Khalsa after taking *pahul*.¹⁷ Thus recruitment in Sikh army as well as in religion was entirely voluntary. The people were recruited in army after administering them to *pahul*. The Ahluwalia chief administered *pahul* to the new entrants and also kept some of them in his service.¹⁸ The text suggests that the amount collected through loot and plunder was distributed among the soldiers apparently seems that on one hand it was to attract the youngmen to join their cause and on the other hand to raise a strong and well equipped force against the Mughals.¹⁹

Dress was provided to the soldiers of the Sikh army before the expedition. There are instances in the text like *Dushalas*, *Chaddran*, *Khes*, *Lacha*, *Pashmina-ke-phatte*, *kimkhabs* and *Atlus and Satina* etc. were given according to their ranks. Horses and their libas (along with their trappings) and also kinds of weapons were granted.²⁰ The instances in the text suggest that whenever diwan was held, to uplift their courageous moods, the bards sang the songs of bravery. These bards were regularly employed and in lieu of their services, they were conferred with jagirs.²¹ Moral values were also

14. *Ibid.*, f66b : ਤੇ ਅਜੇ ਇਬਿਤਦਾਇ ਸੀ ਅਰੁ ਫੌਜ ਸਰਦਾਰੋ ਕੇ ਵਾਜਬੀ ਹੀ ਸੀ॥

15. *Ibid.*, f 66b : ਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਮਾਂਝੇ ਮੈਂ ਦਿਨ ਕੇ ਤੇ ਰਾਤ ਕੇ ਭੀ ਗਾਵਾਂ ਯਾਗੀਆਂ ਕੋ ਮਾਰਨਾ ਤੇ ਫੌਜ ਕੋ ਲੂਟਾਂ ਵਾਫਰ ਹੋਵੇ॥ ਤਾਂ ਫੌਜ ਭੀ ਰੋਜ਼ ਬੇਰੋਜ਼ ਵਾਫਰ ਹੋਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ॥

16. *Ibid.*, f106b. : ਤੇ ਨਣੇ ਵੀ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਇਸ ਮਜਬ ਕੋ ਇਖਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਤੇ ਸੇ ਵਾਫਰ ਅਰੁ ਡੇਰੇ ਮੈਂ ਰਲਤੇ ਸੇ॥

17. *Ibid.*, f58a. : ਤੇ ਵਾਫਰ ਹੀ ਮਕਾਨਾ ਕੋ ਜਮੀਦਾਰਾ ਦੇ ਬੇਟੇ ਪਹੁਲ ਲੈਕੇ ਫੌਜ ਮੈਂ ਰਲਤੇ ਸੇ॥ ਤੇ ਕਿਤਨੇ ਹੀ ਅਪਣੀ ਫੌਜ ਕੋ ਸਿਰਕਰਦੇ ਕਰੇ॥

18. *Ibid.*, f106b. : ਤੇ ਆਪ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਮਜਬ ਕੀ ਰਸੂਮ ਹੈ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਸੀ ਆਦਿ ਉਹ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਨਕੋਂ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਰਲਾਵਤੇ ਸੇ॥ ਅਰੁ ਨੌਕਰ ਰਖਤੇ ਸੇ॥

19. *Ibid.*, f58. : ਤੇ ਇਸੀ ਵਜਾ ਵਾਫਰ ਮਕਾਨ ਮਾਰੇ॥ ਤੇ ਕਈਆਂ ਮਕਾਨਾ ਕੋ ਜਪਤ ਕਰਕੇ ਟਕੇ ਲੈਣੇ॥ ਅਰੁ ਬਾਂਟ ਦੇਣੇ॥ ਤੇ ਕਈ ਮਰਤਬੇ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਕੀ ਤਰਫ ਜੰਗਲ ਜਾਣਾ॥ ਫੇਰ ਵਟੂਆਂ ਤੇ ਭੱਟੀਆਂ ਥੀ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਨੇ ਲੈਣੇ ਅਰੁ ਫੌਜ ਕੋ ਬਾਂਟ ਦੇਣੇ॥

20. *Ibid.*, f176a. : ਫੇਰ ਦੁਸਾਲੇ ਤੇ ਚਾਦਰਾਂ ਅਰੁ ਖੋਸ ਤੇ ਲਾਚੇ॥ ਪਸਮੀਨੇ ਕੇ ਫੈਟੇ॥ ਕਾਮਿਖਾਬ ਅਰੁ ਅਤਲਸ ਤੇ ਸਿਟੀਨਾਂ ਥੀਂ ਆਦਿ ਦਰਜੇ ਬਾਦਰਜੇ ਸਭ ਫੌਜ ਕੋ ਬਖਸੇ॥ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਤਲੇਇ ਕਰ॥ ਅਰੁ ਘੋੜੇ ਤੇ ਘੋੜਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਲਿਬਾਸ॥ ਅਰੁ ਹਥਿਆਰਾਂ ਕੋ ਕਿਸਮ ਭੀ ਬਖਸੇ॥

21. *Ibid.*, f132a. : ਤੇ ਹਮੇਸਾ ਕਰਹਿਰੀ ਮੈਂ ਭੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀਆਂ ਕਾ ਹੀ ਜਿਕਰ ਹੋਤਾ ਰਹਿਤਾ ਸਾ॥ ਯਾਂ ਵਾਰਾ ਸੁਨਤੇ ਸੇ॥ ਤੇ ਢਾਢੀਆਂ ਕੋ ਗਾਂਵ ਭੀ ਦੀਏ ਹੁਏ ਸੇ॥

given much importance not only in civil life but also in battlefield. During Kissapura expedition (Sammat 1806) instructions to every expeditioner were that they would not touch enemy's *jewar* and *asbab* which they have gathered by committing sin.²² Even the women were held in high esteem by the Sikhs. They treated them with respect. The author describes how during the battle of Sialkot (Sammat 1821), the honour of the women was held high by the Sikhs. The women of Jahan Khan's camp along with their belongings were granted protection and were sent to Jammu, the place of their choice under the escort, protection and proper arrangement was made for their travelling.²³

The salary or dues of the soldiers were paid through loot and plundering.²⁴ The author further adds that some of the Sikh leaders grew rich through loot and then began to recruit soldiers for themselves.²⁵ Before leading for any expedition meeting was held where strategy and venue for fighting was decided with other Sardars.²⁶ Another important factor i.e. preparations for the expedition were also worked out in detail during the meeting. The author particularly refers to the details in the expedition towards Jaipur where diwans were to get prepared the *fauj-ka-asbab* of every department (*har-ik-karkhana*).²⁷ To meet the ammunition and finances of the army during the expedition arrangements were made behind by deputing Sardars to collect the

22. *Ibid.*, f74b : ਤੇ ਫਰਿਮਾਇ ਦੀਆ ਜੋ ਕਸਾਂਈਓ ਕੋ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਨਾ ॥ ਤੇ ਉਨ ਕਾ ਜੇਵਰ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਅਸਬਾਬ ਕੋ ਨਾ ਲੇਣਾ ॥ ਜੋ ਏਹ ਦੌਲਤ ਬਡੇ ਗੁਨਾਹਾਂ ਕੀ ਓਨਾ ਜਮਾ ਕਰੀ ਹੇ ॥
23. *Ibid.*, f123b : ਤਾਂ ਫੀਲ ਜੋ ਜਹਾਨ ਖਾਂ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਕਾ ਉਹਾ ਸਾ ਸੋ ਲੇਲੀਆ ॥ ਫੇਰ ਏਕ ਔਰਤ ਨੇ ਉਨ ਕੇ ਸਭਨਾ ਕੀ ਤਰਫੇ ਜਾਹਰ ਕਰਾ ਜੋ ਹਮਰਾ ਪੜਦਾ ਅਬ ਆਪ ਕੋ ਅਖਿਤਿਆਰ ਹੈ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਫਰਿਮਾਇਆ ਜੋ ਜਿਸ ਮਕਾਨ ਤੁਮ ਚਾਹੋ ਉਹਾ ਪਹੁਚਾਇ ਦੇਈਏ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਉਨਾਂ ਜੰਮੂ ਜਾਣ ਕੋ ਚਾਹੀਆ ॥ ਫੇਰਿ ਕਿਸੀ ਨੇ ਅਰਜ ਕਰੀ ਜੋ ਲਾਖਾਂ ਰੁਪਈਆਂ ਦਾ ਅਸਬਾਬ ਅਰੁ ਜੇਵਰ ਮਰਸਾਂ ਬੇਸ ਕੀਮਤ ਇਨ ਕੇ ਪਾਸ ਹੈ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਤੋਸੇਖਾਨਾ ਸਭ ਜਹਾਨ ਖਾਂ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੈ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਆਪਨੇ ਫਰਿਮਾਇਆ ਜੋ ਏਹ ਬਾਤ ਖੁਬ ਨਹੀ ॥ ਜੋ ਇਸ ਵਖਤ ਜਪਤੀ ਕਰੀਏ ॥ ਤਾਂ ਭਾਰ ਬਰਦਾਰੀ ਦੇਕਰ ਜੰਮੂ ਕੋਂ ਭੇਜੇ ॥
24. *Ibid.*, f64a : ਤੇ ਲੁਟਾ ਸਭ ਫੌਜ ਕੋ ਮਾਫ ਕਰਨੀਆ ॥ ਇਸੀ ਸੂਰਤ ਯਾਗੀ ਮਕਾਨ ਸੇ ਸੋ ਮਾਰਨੇ ॥ ਤੇ ਫੌਜ ਕੋ ਲਣਾਇ ਦੇਣੇ ॥
25. *Ibid.*, f106b : ਤੇ ਕਈ ਸਹਿਰਾਂ ਕੀਆਂ ਲੁਟਾ ਮੈਂ ਦੌਲਤਮੰਦ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਤੇ ਸੇ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਕਈ ਅਦਨਿਆਂ ਸੀਂ ਆਲਾ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਤੇ ਸੇ ॥
26. *Ibid.*, f187b : ਆਪਨੇ ਸਭ ਸਰਦਾਰੋ ਕੋ ਸਲਾਹ ਪੂਛੀ ਤਾਂ ਸਭਨਾ ਨੇ ਜਾਹਰ ਕਰਿਆ ॥ ਜੋ ਵਹੀਰੂ ਜੰਗਲ ਕੋ ਜਾਵੇ ॥ ਤੇ ਏਹ ਮਲਾਹ ਮੁਕਰਰ ਹੂਈ ॥ ਜੋ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਜੀ ਜਬ ਹਟ ਕੇ ਵਿਲਾਇਤ ਕੋ ਆਵੇਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਮਾਂਝੇ ਮੈਂ ਲੜੀਏਗਾ ॥
27. *Ibid.*, ff174b, 175ab : ਤਾਂ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਸੇਖ ਕਰੀਮੁਲਾ ਕੋ ॥ ਤੇ ਬੂੜਾ ਮੱਲ ਕੋ ॥ ਤੇ ਮੁਹਕਮ ਭਾਭੜੇ ਕੋ ॥ ਫਰਮਾਇਆ ਜੋ ਫੌਜ ਕਾ ਅਸਬਾਬ ਤੇ ਤੋਸੇਖਾਨੇ ਕਾ ਤੇ ਖੇਮਿਆ ਸੀ ਆਦਿ ਜਲਦੀ ਤੀਆਰ ਕਰੁਵਾਵੇ ਵਾਫੂਰ ਜੋ ਸਫਰ ਦੂਰ ਕਾ ਹੈ ॥ ਤੇ ਦੀਵਾਨੇ ਕੋ ਤੇ ਬਾਘੇ ਮਰਵਾਹੇ ਕੋ ॥ ਅਰੁ ਮਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋ ॥ ਤੇ ਸਰਧੇ ਜੀਉਤ ਕੋ ॥ ਤੇ ਰਹਿਮਤ ਖਾਂ ਤੋਸੇਖਾਨੇ ਕੋ ॥ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਚੰਦ ਤੇ ਕਿਸਨ ਚੰਦ ਦਗਿਲ ਵਗੈਰੇ ਹੋਰਨ ਕੋ ਭੀ ਤਾਕੀਦ ਕਰੀ ਜੋ ਹਰ ਇਕ ਕਾਰਖਾਨੇ ਤੇ ਫੌਜ ਕੋ ਅਸਬਾਬ ਕੀ ਤਿਆਰੀ ਜਲਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ ॥

revenues and sent them to the expeditioners in the battlefield.²⁸

The Sikh forces were less in number in comparison to Mughals - the rulers of Hindustan and the Afghans - the invaders. The resources of the Sikhs were also scanty vis-à-vis Mughals and Afghans. That is why they rarely fought open battles with the enemy. Sikhs use to form a strategy, towards the enemy. Opposite to its real strength of Mughal empire lay not in its army but in the vast resources of Hindustan.²⁹ The Sikhs seem to have realized this. Thus, they followed the strategy of loot and plunder. According to Ram Sukh Rao, the Sikhs fell upon the guards carrying state treasury.³⁰ Sikhs also plunder those villages who do not submit to them particularly in presence of enough Mughal army.³¹ At times they advise the villagers to withhold the payment of land revenue to the Mughal authorities. Where persuasion failed they resorted to calculated plundering in the country side and raided villages particularly hostile villages in Majha. It may be pointed out that the frequency of such raids during day and night was increased to spread confusion and anarchy. It seems that the Sikh leaders resorted such kind of methods to persuade the local people to co-operate them in their struggle against injustice and tyrant rulers.³² Those who submitted voluntarily to Dal Khalsa were rewarded and those who delayed were punished.³³ Those who delayed in submitting were usually plundered.

Regarding Afghans, Sikhs adopted different warfare method. Their simple technique was - robbed the robber.³⁴ In the beginning Sikhs concentrated on plundering raids with little fighting and later on they combined serious fighting with plundering. Jassa Singh's descriptive account of his battles clearly indicates that the military superiority does not lie in numerical strength or weapon system, it may lie in speed, mobility, superior physical strength, mental ability and spirit of dedication and cause. Abdali unlike Mughals, fought a highly mobile and aggressive type of war. Whenever, it suited the Sikhs, they

28. *Ibid.*, f136b : ਅਰੁ ਬਾਰੂਦ ਤੇ ਸੀਸਾ ਤਾਂ ਵਾਫੂਰ ਨਾਲ ਰਹਿਤਾ ਸਾ॥ ਪਰ ਹੋਰ ਭੀ ਰਾਜਾ ਗਜਪਤਿ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਪਰ ਤਨਖਾਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਤੀ ਸੀ॥ ਜੋ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਮੈਂ ਮੁਜਰੇ ਲੈਣਾ॥ ਅਰੁ ਔਰਾਂ ਤਰਫਾ ਸੀ ਭੀ ਇਸੀ ਸੂਰਤ ਆਵਤਾ ਸਾ॥ ਅਰੁ ਪੀਛੇ ਸੈਂ ਭੀ॥

29. Arjan Dass Malik, *An Indian Guerilla War*, p. 42.

30. Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Singh Binod*, ff 58a, 64a, 65b.

31. *Ibid.*, f 87a : ਸਹਿਰੇ ਅਰੁ ਮਕਾਨੋਂ ਕੋ ਮਾਰਤੇ ਅਰੁ ਲੁਟਤੇ ਸੇ॥ ਅਰੁ ਮੁਲਖ ਜੰਗਲ ਕੈ ਅਰੁ ਪਹਾੜੋਂ ਕੀ ਤਰਫ ਜਾਇ ਕੇ ਅਰਾਮ ਕਰਤੇ ਸੇ॥

32. *Ibid.*, f 136 a.

33. *Ibid.*, f 64a-b : ਜੋ ਖੁਦ ਹਾਜਰ ਹੂਆ ਉਸ ਪਰ ਰਿਆਇਤ ਹੂਈ॥ ਜੋ ਨਾ ਹਾਜਰ ਹੂਆ॥ ਉਸ ਕੋ ਸਿਜਾਇ ਪਹੁਚਾਇ॥

34. Arjan Dass Malik, *An Indian Guerilla War*, p. 80.

fell upon the Afghan convoys for loot and further they hover around the Afghan camp cutting off stragglers and intercepting the supplies. Ram Sukh Rao also refers to frontal attack of the Sikhs on the *lashkar* of Abdali.³⁵ Sikhs never permitted themselves to get maneuver in pitched battle of sufficiently long duration. The Sikhs would only offer Abdali when he was not in position to accept it, either due to the urgency of returning home or because his soldiers were already exhausted. They usually confronted Afghans when they were eager to return home.

The tactics of the Sikhs were not static and were usually worked out by them on the spot. They practice all type of harassing tactics such as *shub-khun*, in which troop movements and fighting at night were particularly adopted so that enemy may not take rest. The author also noticed the soldiers of Dhaha were expert in day battle but they were matchless attackers in night operation. *Kahi* i.e. foreging party appears to be a regular feature of the military activity of the times. *Chahian*, the erected barricades around the encampment, which was mostly defended by guns. *Morchas*, digging of trenches around the area. Murakhe-vanguard of the army to keep watch on enemy. Aman, from details of warfare it seems that it was customary to grant protection whenever enemy asked for it. Sikhs unable to destroy Afghan force would attack it bit by bit. Dal Khalsa army was divided into three tumans. One tuman would attack on the frontal detachment of the Afghan army and engage them in fighting for sometime and then suddenly retire from the battlefield. This gave the enemy an idea that Sikhs had taken to flight. The detachment of the enemy pursued them and when the Sikhs found that their pursuers away from the immediate succour of their own body, they would all of a sudden, came to halt, turn back and attack them.

The base areas of the Sikhs were Jammu hills, Kangra hills, Lakhi jungle³⁶ and the bars.³⁷ The height and impregnability of the hills and the thickness of the jungle thus difficulties of communication made these an ideal base areas. The numerical strength of the Sikh army as suggested by Ram Sukh Rao was one lac.³⁸

35. *Ibid.*, f187b.

36. Lakhi Jungle - situated in the Bhatinda district and measuring about 24 kos on each side. In north bounded by Jagraon, in east by Haryana, south by Bhatner and west by desert of Bikaner.

37. Bar : These were smaller base areas of the Sikhs. They were - Sandal Bar, Ganji and Nili Bar.

38. Ram Sukh Rao, *Jassa Singh Singh Binod*, f 126b : ਅਰੁ ਦਨਾਇ ਲਾਖ ਅਸਵਾਰ ਪਿਆਦਾ ਫੇਰੇ ਮੈਂ ਜਾਚਿਓ ਮੈਂ॥

Thus, when analysed from the political military point of view, Dal Khalsa was well-developed radical model capable of giving battle to the enemy in political, cultural, ideological and military battle-fronts. To meet the political threat Sikhs formed two different strategies as we have already seen against Mughals and Afghans. This shows that they were conscious as they have fully realised the objectives of their enemies and how to tackle them. The technique followed by the Sikhs in war against Abdali was entirely new element which they introduced in North Indian Warfare. Last but not the least is the socialization of Sikh military system. Whosoever wanted to join Khalsa army was initially administered to *pahul*. The very ideas of equality and fraternity were in its foundation which led to integration of society with war machinery.

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ADMINISTRATIVE ACUMEN : MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH

*Rajbans Singh Gill**

The most important consequence of taking on the title of "Maharajah of the Punjab" was that thereby Ranjit Singh assumed the rights of sovereignty not only over all Sikhs (the government itself being Sarkar Khalsaji) but over all people who lived within the ill-defined geographical limits of the Punjab....."

— Khushwant Singh

There is a remarkable similarity in the lives of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) and Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821). They dominated the East and the West in the later part of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. Pitted, ironically, against the same arch rival, the British, they maintained a heroic stand. Their empires had as many similarities as did their personal lives. Not only were they men of a short physical stature and enjoyed short life-spans, but they had an unmatched appetite for territorial aggrandisement, possessed prodigious administrative acumen and were also almost equally struck by Cupid.¹

Popularly known as the Lion of Punjab, Ranjit Singh was not only the greatest man of his time in Punjab but was also among the few leading figures of the history of that period. Because of his extraordinary qualities as a fighter, conqueror and an empire-builder, Ranjit Singh is often compared with Napoleon Bonaparte, Bismarck and Akbar. Hero of many accounts by European travellers and Indian chronicles, he is perhaps the most enduring character in Sikh history. His reign was marked by benevolent rule, all round development, secular values and patriotic fervour.²

Ranjit Singh was the monarch of an authoritative State extending from Tibet to Sindh and from the Khyber Pass to the Sutlej. Sovereign kingdoms and domains have almost customarily been established and sustained on the power of arms. Conversely, it goes to Ranjit Singh's credit that while fulfilling

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1. *The Tribune*, 10th February, 2002.

2. Harbans Singh, *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*.

his ambitions, he used bare minimum force. Barron Charles Hugel³ records: "Never perhaps was so large an empire founded by one man with so little criminality." Unequalled for the daring and originality of his many-sided genius, Ranjit Singh gave to Punjab four decades of peace, prosperity and progress. Benefits of this were enjoyed equally by all communities — Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. To unite the three principal communities — Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs — in a common venture and resolve them to the new political order through moderation was no mean achievement. The most notable trait of Ranjit Singh's polity was the complete freedom of expression and worship enjoyed by all his subjects.

In the organisation of government he demonstrated astonishing capacity to grasp minutiae of administration and intuitive urge to draw talent. The system that materialized under him proved to be proficient, effectual and geared towards the interests of the people. But, regrettably, it continued to hinge on his person; which tended to make his exercise of authority get the complexion of an absolute monarchy. His best positive feature was his down to earth knowledge of the affairs of his state and his trouble-free accessibility. He ensured that the ownership of the land was vested with the tiller and the title to dig a new well also belonged to him. His standing orders to the marching troops were not to cause any damage to the crops.

Recruitment to all posts in his state was to be made on merit. He gave higher positions such as the post of the prime minister and the foreign minister etc. to members of the other communities. Some of his closest advisers were Muslims and it is a confirmation of the loyalty he inspired that during the Anglo-Sikh wars, Muslim forces fought as gallantly as the Sikhs. For the first time in Indian history, a landmark was created. *Mazhabis*, the centuries-old untouchables of Hindu society, far from being distinguished against became a customary component of Ranjit Singh's army.

Ranjit Singh's rule was characterised by meticulous adherence of exceptional norms of public demeanour and social moral principles. When the triumphant Khalsa armed forces passed through the streets of Peshawar, he issued strict instructions to his *sardars* to observe restraint in keeping with the Sikh tradition, not to damage any mosque, not to insult any woman and not to destroy any crop. He tried his best to follow the Guru's injunction: "Exercise forbearance in the midst of power, be humble in the midst of honour".

He attributed each success to the favour of God. Royal emblems of crown or throne were conspicuous by their absence in his *Durbar*. When he

3. *The Tribune*; April 8th, 2001.

issued the coins of his empire, he struck them not in his own name, but in the name of the Guru. The rupee and paise were called *Nanakshahi*. The inscription on them in Persian meant: "Kettle: Symbol of the pot from which the poor were fed. Sword: Symbol of power to protect the meek and the helpless, and victory and unhesitating patronage have been obtained from Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh."⁴

Although crowned King of the Punjab, he refused to wear the emblem of royalty in his turban. He refused to sit on a throne, and continued as before to hold *darbar* seated cross-legged in his chair, which looked more like a bathtub than a *fauteuil*, or, more often received visitors in the oriental fashion, reclining on cushions on a carpet. When he ordered new coins to be struck, these did not bear his portrait or his name but were named the *Nanakshahi* coins.⁵ The seal of government, likewise, bore no reference to him. The government was not a personal affair but the *Sarkar Khalsaji* of the people who brought it into being; the court for the same reason came to be known as the *Darbar Khalsaji*. The only title he preferred to be addressed was plain and simple *Singh Sahib*. Ranjit Singh did not want to, nor ever did, lose the common touch.

The Sikhs, natural born horsemen (or at least trained as such, even in childhood, since Guru Hargobind's days) did not think much of infantry service. To say they looked down upon it would be an understatement. So the Maharaja recruited Purbias, as soldiers of fortune from the Gangetic plain were called, Punjabi Muslims, Afghans and, later, Gurkhas, as well. These troops were soon tested during the short campaign against Ahmad Khan Sial of Jharig and the *zamindars* of Uchch during the winter of 1803-04.

The infantry thus became the central force, with cavalry and artillery serving as supporting arms. It was organized into battalions of about 900 men each. A battalion, commanded by a kumedan or commandant, assisted by an adjutant and a major, was the standard administrative and manoeuvring unit. Its administrative staff included, besides the usual camp followers and tradesmen, a *munshior* (clerk), a *mutasaddi* (accountant), and a *Granthi* (priest and scripture-reader). A battalion had eight companies of 100 men each, further divided into sections of 25 men each. Similarly, regular cavalry was organized in *risalas*, regiments, subdivided into turps (troops) and artillery into *deras* and batteries. Artillery was further classified according to its mode of traction,

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

which was generally determined by the size of the guns.⁶

In 1804, army had been divided into *topkhana kalan* (heavy artillery) and *topkhana khurd* (light artillery). *Zamburaks* or swivels, usually carried on camels, were attached to infantry units. Horse drawn artillery was introduced in 1810. During the same year, a special artillery corps, known as *topkhana-i-khas* or *topkhana-i-mubarak*, was formed as the royal reserve under Ghaus Muhammad Khan, and popularly known as Mian Ghaus.⁷

Their success and the fact of the matter that the Maharaja himself regularly attended their training sessions soon made the infantry an enviable service, which Sikhs too started joining in large numbers. Ranjit Singh gave increased importance to artillery, which had, till his time, been limited to the use of *zamburaks*, or swivel mounted guns (Camels or other animals) only. He not only increased the number of guns, but also undertook the casting of guns of larger calibre as well as the manufacture of ammunition on a large scale. The reorganization and training of his cavalry, however, waited until the induction into Sikh service of European officers who as veterans of the Napoleonic wars were looking to the well known Sikh Ruler for their next chance to oppose the British aims in India.

The arrival of Jean baptiste Ventura and Jean Francois Allard, two veterans of the Napoleonic Wars, at Lahore in 1822 was the starting point. Ranjit Singh gave them employment after considerable initial hesitation and elaborate verification. He charged them with the raising of a special corps of regular army, the *Fauj-i-Khas* or *Fauj-i-A'in*. General Ventura trained battalions of infantry and General Allard trained the cavalry. Artillery, its training and command and ordnance were under Punjabi generals, Ilahi Bakhsh and Lahina Singh Majithia, until the arrival of a French officer, General Claude Auguste Court in 1827 and the American Colonel Alexander Gardner in 1832. Lahina Singh Majithia continued to head the armament workshops, and Dr. John Martin Honigberger, a Hungarian physician, was entrusted with the mixing of gunpowder.⁸

Victor Jacquemont,⁹ the French traveller, who met Ranjit Singh in Lahore wrote that the "Maharaja's conversations were like a nightmare. Jacquemont wrote, "He asked a hundred thousand questions to me, about India and the

6. Khushwant Singh; *A History of the Sikhs*, 2 Vols., Princeton, 1963 and 1966.

7. Ganda Singh and Teja Singh (eds.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh: First Death Centenary Memorial Volume*, Amritsar, 1939.

8. W.G Osborne, *The Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh*, London, 1840.

9. *The Tribune*, April 8th, 2001.

British, Europe, Napoleon Bonaparte, the world in general and the next, hell, paradise, the soul, God, the devil and myriad of others of the same kind. In 1812 he rode with the British Commander David Ochterlony to inspect the drill of the English Company,¹⁰ in the style in which they would behave in the field of battle and he admired their performance. He employed French and Italian Generals to train his army on western model. That is why both his infantry and artillery were unrivalled for steadiness.

In 1827, General Court reorganized the artillery into three wings. *Topkhana jinsi*, literally personal artillery (reserve), was a mixed corps with batteries of gavi (bullock drawn) *aspi* (horse drawn), *fili* (elephant drawn) guns and the *Aobobs* (howitzers). *Topkhana aspi* or horsedrawn artillery consisted of batteries for attachment to divisions of irregular army. *Zamburaks* or camel swivels and *ghubaras* or mortars were organized into *deras* or camps subdivided into batteries. Batteries were subdivided into sections of two guns each, with provision for even a single gun functioning as a sub unit.

By any standards, Ranjit Singh was statesman who out of anarchy and chaos had created order and stability and made Punjab a power to reckon with. There was also a glimmering of Punjab Nationalism.¹¹ His task was enormous, his time was short, and his unworthy successors were lacking in political instinct that destroyed all the things he had built with political sagacity and will.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *The Tribune*, April 8th, 2001.

DIWAN SAWAN MAL AS A GOVERNOR OF MULTAN

Rajinder Kaur*

“Great may thy name be, Lala Sawan Mal
thou last repopulated a ruined country”.¹

Sawan Mal, governor of Multan from 1821 to 1844, was a Khatri of Chopra sub-caste from Gujranwala district.² He was born in 1788.³ His father Hoshnak Rai was a servant of Sardar Dal Singh of Akalgarh.⁴ Sawan Mal was his third son. He commenced his public career in the office of his brother Nanak Chand who worked with Diwan Mohkam Chand. In 1820 he joined as a head of the account office under governor Bhaiya Badan Hazari at the salary of 250 Rs per month at Multan.⁵ In a very short time he set right the Multan finance which was an almost inextricable confusion. Badan Hazari could not handle the province. He failed to render account and was dismissed soon after. Sawan Mal who had already attracted the attention of the Maharaja was promoted in his stead. A good scholar of Persian and Arabic he won the appreciation of the Maharaja for his intelligence and administrative skills and quickly rose to higher positions.⁶

A new era began in 1821 when Diwan Sawan Mal was appointed as Kardar of the half province of Multan by Ranjit Singh. In 1829 he was made

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1. Sita Ram Kohli, 'The Multan Outbreak and the trial of Diwan Mulraj', *Punjab University, Historical Society, Journal*, I-II, p. 33.
2. *District and States Gazetteer of undivided Punjab*, Vol. I, Gujranwala District, B.R. Publishing, Delhi, p. 22.
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4. Ganesh Das Bادهhra, *Char-bagh-i-Punjab*, Tr. by Jeet Singh Seetal, Punjab Historical Studies Department, Punjabi University, Patiala, p.171.
5. E.D. MacLagan, *District and State Gazetteer of Undivided Punjab*, Vol. II, Multan District, 1901-02, Lahore Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1902; Lapel Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs, Historical and Biographical notices of the Principal Families*, T.C. Macarthy Chronical Press, Lahore, 1865, p. 275.
6. Harbans Singh (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. IV, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1998, p. 82.

the governor of the whole.⁷ He conferred the title of Diwan on him in December 1832.⁸ He retained his post till his death.

The country which thus came under his rule, comprising the districts of Multan, Leih, Dera Ghazi Khan, Khangarh and parts of Jhang was almost a desert. He faced a daunting task when he took office. Multan was largely desolate as a result of decades of misrule and warfare. Life and prosperity were insecure and the population which once had been numerous and wealthy had become scanty and impoverished.

Sawan Mal possessed considerable administrative experience. As a governor he displayed a tremendous capacity for hardwork and effected great improvements during a long reign. A productive but reasonable revenue system was introduced, extensive measures for the improvement of agriculture were carried out and equal justice was meted out to all classes. Due to these endeavours, cultivation, population and prosperity expanded substantially. Though he himself was a Hindu, but he appreciated the fine qualities of the Pathans and these supplied his army with its most distinguished and dashing officers.

During these twenty three years Diwan Sawan Mal with great executive abilities, raised the province of Multan to a higher state of prosperity that it had perhaps ever before attained: and while giving satisfaction to his government by regular remittances of revenue, he contained to accumulate an enormous private fortune for himself.⁹

Different writers and travellers have given their views about Sawan Mal in their writings. James Douie describes Sawan Mal as an oriental ruler of the best type. Who did much to restore the prosperity of the century of anarchy.¹⁰

According to Munshi Hukam Chand, Diwan Sawan Mal was a wise administrator and the people of Multan mention his name with great respect. He was regular in attending to the affairs of his office and used to sit there daily for several hours. Besides administering justice personally, he paid very careful attention to revenue papers.¹¹

Vigne writes about his personal appearance and government that he is a

7. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar II, Tr. in English, by V.S. Suri, pp. 461, 469, 496.

8. *Ibid.*, Daftar III, Part-I-III, p. 206.

9. Herbert Edwards, *A Year on the Punjab Frontier in 1849-50*, p. 29.

10. *Punjab Settlement Manual*, p. 20.

11. Munshi Hukam Chand, *Tarikh-i-Multan*, pp. 470-71, quoted by Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publications, New Delhi, 1978, p. 74.

thin man, with a good tempered and for a native, a superior expression of his countenance and is said to have distinguished himself at the taking of the city. His government was well spoken of by the Lahani merchants who gave him an excellent character for justice in his dealings with them. Maharaja Ranjit Singh has been heard to say that he was one of the best officers in his service.¹²

According to, G.L. Chopra, Diwan Sawan Mal is stated in every account to have been efficient and progressive. He succeeded in introducing the agricultural reforms of a far reaching character, and thereby changing the whole appearance of the country.¹³

E.D. MacLagan describe that Diwan Sawan Mal was one of the very few men in India, who had been able to combine the exaction of a very full revenue with the complete contentment of the people whom it is exacted.¹⁴

When Diwan Sawan Mal took the charge he kept power tightly concentrated in his own hands and subjected subordinate officials to minute supervision. He stopped the raids of the Kathias in the east of the district. His Naib Daya Ram, a native of Gujranwala suddenly attacked and killed Baku Langrial a noted free-booter in the neighbourhood of Tulamba.¹⁵ The zamindars were made to pay revenue punctually and the Diwan's remittances to Lahore were always complete.

Diwan Sawan Mal handled the revenue affairs of Multan with commendable ability. O'Brien in his account said about the Sikh rule in Multan, "Diwan Sawan Mal's Government was better than anything that had preceded it. Its sole object was the accumulation of wealth for the Diwan. The execution of public works, the administration of justice and security of life and prosperity were a secondary consideration, and were insisted on only because without them agriculture would not prosper, and the revenue would not be paid".¹⁶ The revenue submitted by him nearly twenty-two lakhs which was collected by him from the districts of Multan, Muzaffargarh and Dera Ghazi Khan and parts of Montgomery, Jhang and Dera Ismail Khan. Diwan's system was well suited to agricultural conditions of the country under his rule.

12. *A Personal Narrative of a visit of Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan*, Vol. II. London 1840, p. 23.

13. *The Punjab as a Sovereign State 1799-1839*, Vishveshvaranand Institute, Hoshiarpur, 1960, p. 87.

14. *Punjab District Gazetteer of Multan 1923-24*, p. 57.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Edward O. Brien, *Report of the land revenue settlement of the Muzaffargarh District of the Punjab, 1873-80*, Lahore, 1882, p.51.

The revenue was collected by the Kardars from the taluqas with the help of Munshi. In the instructions issued to the Kardars of Multan by Diwan Sawan Mal, they expected to send the revenues punctually in six installments. Three each for the Kharif and the Rabi.

Kharif	-	First Installment	-	15 Maghar
		Second Installment	-	15 Poh
		Third Installment	-	15 Magh
Rabi	-	First Installment	-	15 Jeth
		Second Installment	-	15 Harr
		Third Installment	-	15 Sawan

Under Diwan Sawan Mal there were two classes of revenue- payers. First is *Pattadars* who paid fixed amounts in cash for the wells used for irrigation by them. Second is *Bahawali* who paid a share of the crop on *batai* and *bigha* rates on certain crops. The government was entitled to a share of the gross produce. This share was known as *Mahsul*, and it might be taken in kind or in cash. Under Diwan Sawan Mal the revenue demand varied between one third of the gross produce in river lands, one-sixth in the dry interior, one-fourth being of the mean. He promoted the colonization of waste lands by offering favourable terms of assessment to individuals who brought new land under cultivation. A large number of colonies were set-up in Jhang and Muzaffargarh, and the colonisers were given protection by Diwan Sawan Mal.¹⁷

Four methods of collection of revenue were employed (i) Jinsi (ii) Nakdi Jinsi (iii) Zabt (iv) Karori. Among them Nakdi Jinsi or cash kind assessment indicated the first step towards a cash revenue and this form of assessment became more common under Diwan Sawan Mal. Another special method of assessment sometimes employed for wells in the heart of Rawa, more especially on the borders of the present Multan and Ladhra Tahsils, was to take a certain sum (generally Rs. 2 or Rs. 3) per yoke cattle in the use on the wells.¹⁸ He levied a fixed cash assessment on wells according to their quality and the circumstances of each locality. When the lessee cultivated more than the usual area attached to one well, the fixed sum was set aside and the whole part of the crop was *bataied*.

Diwan Sawan Mal made many reforms. He induced the people to combine to dig new, and restore old canals. He excavated canals (in the Multan

17. *Muzaffargarh District Gazetteer, 1883-84*, p. 41; *Jhang District Gazetteer 1883-84*, p. 77.

18. *Punjab District Gazetteer of Multan District, op.cit.*, p. 238.

district alone of the length of 300 miles), he favoured commerce and acted in every way as a wise and beneficent ruler.¹⁹ He encouraged the sinking and repair of wells by giving favourable leases. The system of farming out the revenue to the highest bidder was very successful under Sawan Mal.²⁰

He administered justice firmly and impartially. Diwan Sawan Mal's justice was renowned for its even handedness. A peasant once charged that his crops had been ruined by a nobleman's horses that had been allowed to run loose. When one of the Diwan's son Ram Das proved to be the guilty party, Sawan Mal imprisoned him for several days. According to Herbert Edwards, "Between the poor he did justice with great pains and impartiality; but a rich man, even if in the right never got a verdict from Sawan Mal without paying for it."²¹

During the reign of Ranjit Singh Sawan Mal increased his power day by day but he never became rebel. He was little disturbed but he paid his tribute with regularity; there was no cause of complaint. Dogra brothers hatred him, for he was the arch opponent of the minister Raja Dhian Singh and his brother Gulab Singh and Suchet Singh whose influence at the court of Ranjit Singh was usually all powerful.²²

In April, 1834, a vexatious broke out between the zamindars of Qadirabad in the territory of Diwan Sawan Mal and among the villagers of suburbs of Pindi Bhatian in the taluqa of Raja Gulab Singh. In this quarrel the zemindars of the later territory were wounded and many others were killed. The Maharaja ordered Diwan Sawan Mal to hand over the village to Raja Gulab Singh and deduct its income from the account of the Maharaja.²³

In the month of June, another disturbance between the Kardars of Raja Gulab Singh and Diwan Sawan Mal took place and Devi Dayal was appointed with the order that if the Diwan wanted to spend his day joyfully he was to withdraw his hand from mischief.²⁴

In April 1837, the Maharaja ordered Raja Gulab Singh to establish his rule in the four taluqas of Layalpur, Chaniot, Pindi Bhatian and Jhang Sial hitherto included in the territory of Diwan Sawan Mal. Misr Sukhraj was appointed to realize the money from the country.²⁵

19. Lepel Griffin, *op.cit.*, p. 274.

20. B.J. Hasrat, *Life and Times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, Hoshiarpur, 1977, p. 108.

21. *Op.cit.*, p. 31.

22. G.T. Vigne, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

23. Sohan Lal Suri, *Daftar III, Part III*, Tr. by Amarvant Singh, Guru Nanak Dev Univ., Amritsar, 2001.p. 245.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

25. *Ibid.*, *Daftar III, Part IV and V*, p. 12.

Additional revenue for the four taluqas of the country of Diwan Sawan Mal were fixed 1,25,000 rupees and his grand son Rama Chand accepted in writing. Hence a letter was sent to Raja Gulab Singh not to interfere with the territory of the Diwan.²⁶ Moreover, Raja Gulab Singh with his troops reached near Rampur and asked Diwan's soldiers to hand over the fort to him. A fight started and several were killed and wounded on both sides.²⁷

In November, 1837 a quarrel ensued between the Kardars and zamindars of Sahiwal in the territory of Diwan Sawan Mal and Raja Dhiyan Singh. The Maharaja ordered Raja Tej Singh to suppress the dissensions completely.²⁸ During the same year, the whole of the cis-Indus country as far as Mianwali, was made over to Diwan Sawan Mal in whose name it was successfully governed by his son Karam Narayan and his grandson Wazir Chand.²⁹

After the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839 the Dogra brothers who were the enemies of Diwan Sawan Mal, attempted to destroy him. They became all powerful at the court and it was proposed to demand from him half a million sterling and summoned to Lahore to render his account in Sept. 1840. Diwan Sawan Mal refused to do so. He was knowing his power and believing that the court would not dare to proceed to extremities. An amicable arrangement however was made and he returned in peace to Multan.

In March of the following year Sher Singh obtained his power. He directed both Sawan Mal and Raja Dhiyan Singh to raise fresh troops, to replace turbulent Khalsa regiments. In compliance with his order Diwan Sawan Mal began to raise Muhammadan troops, with the greatest activity with the real object of defending himself against Dhiyan Singh. On the other side Raja Dhiyan Singh was not less energetic, hoping with his new troops, not only to overwhelm Sawan Mal, but to defend Jammu both against the Sikhs and the British.

In January, 1842 the Mazari tribe, which had always given trouble to Sikh governors, rebelled and made a decent upon Rajan with the hope to plunder it before the arrival of help. But Sawan Mal marched against them and they were compelled to return. Throughout these years Sawan Mal was strengthening himself. He bestowed much care and money on the improvement of much defences of Multan and there is every reason to believe that he intended

26. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

29. *District and State Gazetteer of Undivided Punjab*, Vol. I, Mianwali District, p. 88.

at some favourable opportunity to throw of his allegiance to Lahore and declare his independence.³⁰

Diwan Sawan Mal had a tragic end. On 16th September 1844 a soldier, who was legally being proceeded against him for thieving, wounded the Diwan with his pistol when the latter was on his evening stroll. As a result of that wound he died³¹ on September 29, 1844. Thus perished the wisest and best of all Sikh governors. He continued in office till his last breath. He never misused his power. The time of Diwan Sawan Mal still regarded by the people with esteem and affection. Every segment of the population gained from his administration whether its Hindu, or Muslim peasants or Pathans. The Multan Subah was known throughout the kingdom as Daral-Aman (the abode of peace). The peace tranquility he was established in the territory of Multan surpassed that of Hindustan which is governed by a body of law.³²

Diwan Sawan Mal left the enormous sum of ninety lakhs of rupees, amassed by him during twenty three years of unmolested government. It was divided by his six sons.³³ During his life time, the Diwan had assigned the administration of these territories to his two sons. The eldest, Mulraj ruled Shujabad and Jhang while Karam Narain was made incharge of Leih. It was a common saying amongst the people that while Multan had been blessed with monsoon showers (*Sawan*) and Leih with Karam (grace), Jhang had been affected with the earn weevil (*Mula*). Diwan Sawan Mal succeeded as governor of Multan by his son Mulraj. He could wield pen and sword equally well and it was a matter of great credit to him.

30. Lepel Griffin, *op. cit.*, p. 276.

31. Ganesh Das Badehra, *op. cit.*, quoted by Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

32. Mohan Lal, *Travels in Punjab, Afghanistan and Turkistan*, Nirmal Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, reprint, 1986, p.401.

33. Ram Das, Diwan Mulraj, Karam Narayan, Sham Singh, Ram Singh and Narayan Singh.

ROLE OF FAQIR NURUDDIN AT LAHORE DARBAR

*Inderjeet Singh Kahlon**

Faqir Nuruddin was the third son of Ghulam Mohiyuddin and the youngest brother of Faqir Azizuddin. He was one of the prominent Muslim courtiers who served the Sikh sovereign Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors. Faqir Nuruddin neither possessed the ability nor the courage like his brother Azizuddin, whom he resembled in many points. He passed early years of his life in devotion.

Faqir Nuruddin had performed a lot of duties. Waheeduddin calls him as "Ranjit Singh's Home Minister".¹ He was the royal physician, apothecary-general, almoner, director of the royal palaces and gardens, one of the three custodians of the keys of the royal treasury, commandant of the arsenal at the fort, a judge extraordinary, keeper of the Maharaja's judicial conscience, and a lot more. These multifarious duties brought him into constant personal contact with the Maharaja who learned to respect him for his integrity and piety. There developed between the two men, in course of time, a kind of spiritual bond. Thus, without being a member of the Maharaja's council, Nuruddin had a great personal influence on him.

According to Diwan Amarnath, when in 1801, Ranjit Singh assumed the title of the Maharaja, Nuruddin was appointed as a Hakim or physician in the court and put in charge of dispensaries, in the city of Lahore.² He also performed protocol duties on behalf of the state.

Nuruddin was indeed, a versatile man who was entrusted by the Maharaja Ranjit Singh with diverse responsibilities such as administration of the capital, superintendence of artillery-stores and commissariat arrangement for the visiting dignitaries. Some times he also arranged the festival functions by the order of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.³ Like his brother, Azizuddin, he was also assigned important administrative responsibilities outside the capital.

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1. Faqir Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Patiala, 2001, p.23.

2. Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, Kirpal Singh (ed.), Patiala, 1995, p.17.

3. Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-tawarikh*, Daftar II, Amritsar, 2002, p.401.

In 1810 Maharaja Ranjit Singh made him incharge of the district of Dhanni.⁴ Nuruddin performed his duties in a good way and was then sent to Gujrat,⁵ where he had some difficulty in reducing people to obedience. In 1811 Maharaja entrusted with him administrative power (authority) of Jalandhar, in the next year Maharaja gave him administrative appointments of Sialkot, Daska Holawal and Wazirabad. In the beginning of 1817 he was sent to administer the territories of Ramgarhia *misal* seized by Ranjit Singh towards the end of 1816.⁶

In 1818 he was called back to Lahore and henceforward his duty was generally at the court. He was then put incharge of the fort and he completed the work of the ramparts. He also took care of royal gardens and palaces. He was also incharge of implementing Ranjit Singh's charity plans to the poor and revert to deserving people. He was in possession of one key of the royal treasury kept in Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque) at Lahore, the other two keys being with Misar Beli Ram and Diwan Hukam Singh respectively. In 1826 Nuruddin was also sent to Pind Dadan Khan.⁷

In 1827, he went to Kapurthala on a mission to restore normal relations after a temporary estrangement of relations between Ranjit Singh and local chief Fateh Singh Ahluwalia. In 1831 he proceeded to Sayadpur and Makhad to assist Raja Gulab Singh in his administration of that part of the country.⁸

Like his elder brother Azizuddin, he was trusted man of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. An interesting anecdote shows how Maharaja loved his loyalty and truism. Once Prince Sher Singh, second son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, had an eye on the Maharaja's favourite horse, named 'Doolo', and had several times unsuccessfully approached to his father for the said horse. Once he took away the horse from the royal stable without the Maharaja's permission. When many days had passed without the horse having been returned to the royal stables, the darogha got frightened and reported the matter personally to the Maharaja. When the Maharaja came to know of it he ordered that the Prince be exiled and his property forfeited. The Prince ran to Nuruddin, who was his tutor and asked him to calm the Maharaja. Nur-ud-din met the Maharaja Ranjit

4. Bhagat Singh, "Court and Courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Patiala, October 1980, p.85.

5. Nizar, Bakhshish Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh De Darbari*, Amritsar, 1976, p.55.

6. Garrett, H.L.O. and Chopra G.L. (eds.), *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh 1810-1817*, New Delhi, 1986, p.260.

7. Nizar, Bakhshish Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh de Darbari*, p.56.

8. *Ibid.*, p.56.

Singh and addressed him, "Maharaja, you have punished him for too lightly. He took away the horse as if it was his father's property".⁹ The Maharaja burst into laughter on hearing this witty truism and not only ordered to return of the Prince's property and the cancellation of his exile but also granted 'Doolo' to Prince Sher Singh along with a royal trappings.

There is an another incident explained by Waheeduddin that one day Faqir Nuruddin was stopped by a band of Akalis near the Shahidganj mosque in Landa bazaar and asked to pay them "gappa" (a gift of money). Faqir Nuruddin mentions that they did so, in a very respectful manner. He did not have enough money with him and, therefore, he asked them to come at his house, when they did so he gave them two thousand rupees.¹⁰ When the Maharaja got to know of the incident and had the men arrested and produced before him. He seemed to be so angry that the *Faqir* apprehended that he would award them very severe punishments. To avoid enmity with them, he told to the Maharaja that this was not a case of robbery or extortion, since he had given the money voluntarily. The Maharaja was displeased for having failed in meting out the punishment which he thought the men deserved but he had to let them go. However, Nuruddin was amply repaid for his clemency or sagacity and the *Akalis* never bothered him again.

Nuruddin was closely associated with his brother Faqir Azizuddin in the conduct of negotiation with the British Government. Both were lover of the English and earnestly desirous that the two states of India and Lahore should always remain on friendly terms. Nuruddin also had a very important duty at Lahore Darbar. This was making arrangements for the stay and comforts of the foreign visitors and the East India Company's officers and also accompanied the foreign visitors to the Maharaja.¹¹ He was generally a member of the reception committee formed by the Maharaja to receive the foreign dignitaries.

Some times Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered him to distribute salaries to the servants, soldiers etc. According to Garrett and Chopra, on 7th August 1817, a letter was sent by the Maharaja to the Hakim Nuruddin to distribute salaries of two months to the Garrison of the fort of Sialkot.¹²

9. Faqir Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, p.24.

10. Faqir Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, p.110.

11. Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, T.B. Jervis (ed.), Delhi, Reprint in 2000, pp.299, 308.

12. Garrett, H.L.O. and Chopra, G.L. (eds.), *Events of the Court of Ranjit Singh 1810-1817*, p.277.

One of the most important duties of Nuruddin was to supervise Maharaja's food, which was prepared under the supervision of Hakim Bishan Dass, a trusted assistant of Nuruddin, and tasted in the presence of the latter by a team of professional tasters, having been served to them in special poison-detecting plates. The effect of the food on the tasters was watched for two hours. After all these processes the food was put into special containers having locks, and the locks were marked with Nuruddin's personal seal. The Maharaja never took any food without watching the seal.¹³

Like his elder brother he also started his work at Lahore Darbar in 1801 when he was appointed as a Hakim or physician in the city of Lahore.¹⁴ He was also known as *Hakim-i-Badghdadi*. All types of medicines required for Maharaja Ranjit Singh were prepared under his supervision.¹⁵

If there was any person who was in a position to know all about what happened in the royal harem, that person was Nuruddin who was incharge of all affairs relating to the Maharaja's palaces.

Nuruddin speaks with particular regard, approaching admiration, of two daughters of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra whom Ranjit Singh married after an expedition conducted especially for their sake. The elder one of these was called Mehtab Devi but was better known as 'Guddan', while the younger one was called 'Raj Banbo'. The latter committed suicide by taking opium and the former burnt herself as *sati* on Ranjit Singh's funeral pyre.

The next Maharani about whom Nuruddin has something inserting to say is Gul Bahar Begum, a courtesan of Lahore. She combined beauty with wit and wisdom, and the Maharaja often profited by her advice on complicated questions. She was fond of exhibiting herself in public and often went out riding on same elephant with the Maharaja.¹⁶

After the death of Ranjit Singh, Nuruddin tried to use soothing influence at Lahore Darbar. On September 1846, when Khalsa army had mutinied and required the Rani to give up her brother and the murders of Prince Pashaura Singh to their vengeance. Nuruddin was sent with Diwan Dina Nath and Sardar Atar Singh Kalianwala to endeavour to soothe them. The mission was without result, and Nuruddin alone of the envoys was allowed to return to Lahore without insult and treats.¹⁷

13. Faqir Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Patiala, p.25.

14. Amar Nath, *Zafarnama-i-Ranjit Singh*, Kirpal Singh (ed.), Patiala, 1995, p.17.

15. Bhagat Singh, 'Court and Courtiers of Maharaja Ranjit Singh', *The Panjab Past and Present*, Patiala, October 1980, p.86.

16. Faqir Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Patiala, p.129.

17. Nizar, Bakhshish Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh de Darbari*, pp.56-57.

After the first Anglo-Sikh war he was one subscribing witness to the treaty of 9th March 1846, on the part of Lahore state, and in December 1846, when Raja Lal Singh the Wazir was deposed for treason. Nuruddin was appointed one of the councillors of regency to carry on the government until the majority of the infant Maharaja Dalip Singh. Nuruddin was not the active member of the council, but he was one of the most disinterested, and his advice was generally sound and well considered. All the time he was ready to perform matters for the British President, while remaining faithful to the interests of his own Government.¹⁸

Like his family his two sons also served the Lahore court by their services. His elder son Zahiruddin was placed with the young Maharaja Dalip Singh as a tutor¹⁹ and his brother Shamuddin, second son of Nuruddin was *Thanedar* of Gobindgarh Fort during the second Sikh war.²⁰

Azizuddin, elder brother of Nuruddin was ordinarily known at court by the title of Faqir Sahib. At the Lahore Darbar Nuruddin was known as *Khalifa Sahib*.²¹ It is clear that the youngest brother of Azizuddin, Nuruddin also was the important member of the Lahore court, although his position was not so conspicuous as that of his elder brother. Ranjit Singh granted him a *jagir* in the *taluka* of Dharmkot.²² For his services and sincerity, the British Government confirmed to him for life all his *jagirs* and allowances, amounting 20885 per annum.²³ He died in 1852.

18. Griffin, Lepel H., *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, Vol. I, Lahore, p.304.

19. Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in Punjab*, p.304.

20. *Ibid.*, p.305.

21. Baron Charles Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, T.B. Jervis (ed.), Delhi, Reprint in 2000, p.292.

22. Garret and Chopra (eds.), *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810-1817*, p.259.

23. Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, p.304.

IMPACT OF SUFISM IN KASHMIR DURING MEDIEVAL TIMES

Charu Gupta*

Sufism has left a deep impact on the society of Kashmir. The contribution of some Sufis or Islamic mystics¹ has been mentioned by a number of scholars in the political history of Kashmir. Different opinions have been given by different scholars regarding the derivation of the word 'Sufi'. Some say that it has originated from the word 'Safa' which means 'purity'² or 'piousness' i.e. the pious people were called Sufis. Others traced its origin from the Greek word 'Sophia'³ which means the wisdom or knowledge i.e. the one who holds great wisdom. There is another view that the term has been derived from the word 'Suf' which means 'wool' and was applicable to those holymen who wore woollen garments and devoted their lives for the help of others.

Different historians have laid down different views regarding the Sufis and the cult Sufism.

Dr. Yusuf Husain says that "Sufism was born in the bosom of Islam."⁴

Dr. Tarachand says, "Sufism has a religion of intense devotion, love was its passion; poetry, song and dance its worship and passing away in God its ideal."

Thus in short, they wanted to say that Sufis were the enlightened holymen whose main aim was to spread love and knowledge. The Muslim mystics or the Sufis of the early centuries were ascetics and men of deep religious beliefs who put more stress on the principles of 'Taubah' (repentance) and 'Tawakkul' (trust in God). They firmly believed in fasts and full love and devotion towards the God.

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1. Ashirbadi Lal Srivastava, *Medieval Indian Culture*, Agra, 1987, p. 61.
2. Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi, *Sufism in Kashmir* (14th to 16th Century), Kashmir, 1976, p. xx.
3. M.P. Srivastava, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, Allahabad, 1975, p. 20.
4. Yusuf Hussain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, Bombay, 1957, p. 33.

Sufism is not only a theoretical process. It preaches devotion and dedication towards the God and denouncement of material i.e. '*fana*'⁵ and '*baqa*'.⁶ The most important development in the history of Islamic mysticism was the organization of orders i.e. '*Silsilahs*'. The growth and development of '*Khanqahs*' and '*Silsilas*'⁷ marked a new era in the process of evolution of Sufism. In these *Khanqahs*, the *Pirs* (Preceptor) used to bestow knowledge over their *Murids* (Disciples). The *Pir* guides his *murid* towards *rah-i-suluk* (the Sufi way) which helps him in getting *Wisali haq* (union with Allah). No *tariqa* (Path) was considered valid without the guidance of the *Pir*.⁸ Thus the *pir* with their *Murids* played a significant role in medieval Kashmir and influenced the social, religious and cultural life of the Kashmiris.

People from all classes and castes came to them and paid great respect. The Sufis were the main holder of learning and piety. Moreover they held a miraculous power that is why they were also called as mystics. The *Pir* lived in the *Khanqah* and the organization of the *Khanqah* in Kashmir was the same as in the rest of India, Persia and Turkistan.⁹ These *Khanqahs* or Hospices were generally built by the princes and nobles for the Sufis as a token of love by their devotees. The relation between the *Pir* and the *murid* was of great importance in the Sufi system. Every *Pir* nominated a successor or *Khalifa* to carry on his work. They also appointed '*walis*' or deputies for spiritual work in a particular area.¹⁰

The *Silsilahs* on the other hand were mainly carried on by leading mystics or Sufis. Sufism reached Kashmir with the foundation of Muslim rule in Kashmir (720/1320).¹¹ But the Sufi activities started properly towards the end of 14th century. Great Sufis like *Sayid Ali Hamdani*,¹² *Sayid Muhammad Hisari*, *Mir Muhammad*, *Sayid Jamaluddin Bukhari* and *Saiyid Ismail Shami*, entered quickly. *Sayid Ali Hamdani* and other Sufis

5. Satish Chandra, *Medieval India (from Sultanate to the Mughals) Part-I, Delhi Sultana (1206-1526)*, New Delhi, 1997, p. 238.

6. Khaliq Ahmed Nizami, *State and Culture in Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1985, p. 209.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 205.

8. Muhammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir*, Kashmir, 2004, p. 250.

9. Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, Kashmir, 2002, p. 399.

10. Satish Chandra, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

11. Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi, *op. cit.*, p. XXX.

12. "*The Undisputed Spiritual and Religious Leader of Kashmiri Muslims*", Muhammad Ashraf Wani, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

came to Kashmir with certain missionary activities. Sufis were able to impress the Kashmiris with their simple attitude. They were free from caste, rituals and priesthoodness. The local Sufis or *Rishis* were very popular among the Kashmiris as they lived with the Kashmiris and promoted their social welfare.¹³

There were six main orders in medieval Kashmir. They were *Qadiriya*, *Suhrawardiya*, *Kubraviya*, *Naqshabandiya*, *Nurbakshiya*, and *Rishi*. The first five orders of Silsilahs were derived from Persia and Turkistan but the *Rishi* order was an indigenous Sufi order. It was founded by Nuru'd-din. He encouraged a peaceful and prosperous life. He was different in his ideology from the rest of the Sufis. He had large number of disciples but most prominent among them were Baba Nasiruddin, Baba Banu'd-din, Baba Zainu'd-din and Baba Latifu'd-din. During the time of Akbar and Jahangir, there were almost 2000 Rishis in the valley.¹⁴

Sufism had two different attitudes towards life. One is the Sufi as ascetic and the other Sufi as a missionary. The Sufis of Persia and central Asia influenced orthodoxy in Kashmir mainly indulged in missionary activities. Since they were foreigners, therefore, they had very meager idea about the society and lifestyle of the Kashmiris. The Rishis on the other side was an indigenous order and could understand the local people, their traditions, norms and religion in a better way. The Rishis served the humanity with one eye. They disapproved the features like tyranny and violence. Therefore, the characteristics of *Rishis* order differentiated it from the rest of the orders prevailing in Kashmir during 14th to 16th century.

During the rule of Qutub-ud-din Aibak, great patronage was provided to the Muslim scholars and saints which led to the increase in their number. The *Naqshbandi* and *Qadri* saints were very less in number and therefore, could not succeed in leaving an everlasting impact over the Kashmiris. On the other hand, the Suhrawardi and Kubravi Sufis were more interested in political, religious and social activities. The Rishis, however, lived in seclusion but had a great impact over the Kashmiris. Some saints were politically very active and accepted the offices of qazi, wazir and ambassadors at times. Sufis, thus, succeeded in influencing the court.

During the reign of Sultan Sikander, the Sufis started influencing the politics of Kashmir. After Sikander, Ali Shah ascended the throne and he

13. M.L. Kapoor, *Kingdom of Kashmir*, Jammu, p. 332.

14. Mohibbul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

also carried the same ideology. However, a change came during the rule of *Zainu'l Abidin* (1420-70). He had great respect and regards for the Sufis and Ulamas but he did not allow them to interfere in the matters of administration. After the death of *Zainu'l Abidin*, orthodoxy again came into form and prevailed during the time of Sultan Haider Shah.

No doubt Sultan Sikander played key role in converting most of the Hindu population of Kashmir to Islam. But the significance of Sufis in this respect cannot be underestimated. They came to Kashmir in order to teach and preach Islam. The stiff and stern Hindu social structure helped in accelerating Islam.¹⁵ The Sufis established '*madrasas*'¹⁶ in Kashmir. The most important *madrasas* which established in Kashmir were the *Madarasu'l-Islam* and *Madrasu'l-urwatul-wusqa*.

The Muslim saints and scholars from Persia and central Asia influenced the society of Kashmir in one and all ways. They brought many changes in the life of the Kashmiri people. The Sufis who came to Kashmir from central Asia were interested in changing the whole culture of the Kashmiris.¹⁷

To conclude, it can be said that Sufis played a considerable role in the history of Kashmir. This cult was more inclined towards the social life of Kashmiris. Sufis played the role of social reformers. They denounced the '*Sati Pratha*' and other evil practices which were practiced earlier. They paid great heed towards women education and thus women empowerment received impetus in the valley. Sufis led the people towards a virtuous, knowledgeable and simple life. They were like a bridge between the rich and poor. The '*Zikr*' ceremonies were held in order to bring all people on one platform.¹⁸ Sufis were totally against tyranny and violence. The '*Ziarats*' and '*Khanqahs*' were the centre of mysticism. These places were visited by people of all castes and creed. The Sufis were worshipped and loved by all men equally. The saint worship plays an important role in the life of Kashmir till now. Thus Sufis greatly influenced the society of Kashmir.

15. M.L. Kapoor, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

16. Madrasas were the places where Islamic knowledge was imparted to the students. Abdul Qaiyum Rafiqi, *op. cit.*, pp. 254-255.

17. During the time of Sultan Sikander, Hindus had adopted Muslim dress and diet of Kashmiris underwent a change. Some Hindus had started eating beef in the company of Muslims, *Ibid.*, p. 257.

18. Mohibbul Hasan, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

BUILT HERITAGE AT RISK : FORTS OF KATHUA (J&K)

*Rajesh Kumar**

Built heritage, in its broadest sense consists of an individual or group of buildings, structures, monuments, installation or remains which are associated with architectural, cultural, social, political, economic or military history.

Jammu and Kashmir is the northern-most state of India, it consists of 22 districts. Of all the districts of Jammu region, Kathua is one of them. Kathua district consists of both hilly and plain areas. It is considered to be the gateway of Jammu & Kashmir from the south-east of the state. The district is located at 32°17' to 32°35' north latitude and 75°32' to 76°16' east longitude and spread over an area of 2651 sq. km.¹ The main inhabitants of Kathua region are called Dogras. Kathua perhaps, accounts for rich built heritage, which is in the form of forts, temples, baolis etc. but present study concerns with forts only. The most important forts of Kathua are Jasrota fort, Basohli fort, Lakhanpur fort, Mankot fort, Bhadu and Jasmergarh. It may be noted here that, since the boundaries of modern Kathua did not exist in the past, need may arise to include built heritage of surrounding areas also in order to understand them in totally.

According to D.C. Prasant, Kathua is a place where three Rajput clans join into one strong state, *kath* in dogri means "Union" and was applied to the area. "Kathas" in earlier times, which with passage of time came to be called Kathua. Kathua flourished after the downfall of Jasrota and in the reign of Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925), Kathua became district centre instead of Jasrota. There were atleast six Rajput kingdoms in what now is Kathua district. Each kingdom had atleast one fort or palace.

According to *Agni Puran*, six types of forts are as under :

1. Dhanu Durg, 2. Mahi Durg, 3. Nar Durg, 4. Briks Durg, 5. Jal Durg, 6. Giri Durg.

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1. Hussain Majid, *Systematic Geography of J&K*, Rawat Publication, Jaipur and Delhi, 2000, pp. 42-45.

In all these six types of forts, Giri Durg is most important and supreme. All Forts of Kathua district can be placed under this category. The region of Jammu is famous for the forts which were constructed by the rulers of different areas from time to time. As per the tradition, twenty two dynasties/principalities of the region constructed forts at their respective capitals.

The fort of Billawar was the seat of power of Baluria rajas till the construction of a new fort at Basohli in 1630 A.D. The ancient name of the state was Vallapura, which later got corrupted to Balor or Billawar.² The name Balor had gained currency by the time of Alberuni.³ The fort is perched on the top of limestone cone, which rises to a height of about 75 ft. from the surrounding plain; it is a small masonry building, about 60 ft. square, with a bastion at each corner and a dry well in the middle of the enclosure. The fort is in a dilapidated condition. The new palace cum fort stands on a beautiful hillock at the back of which far down below, glides a stream and in front of it is quite a large tank in which is reflected the hillock and palaces. Each room had murals which though now rubbed by rain as well as the human hands; seem to have been the finest specimens of *pahari* art. It is very sad to say that nothing of this fort remains except for one wall.

The construction of this fort was started by Raja Bhupat Pal who transferred his capital from Balaur to Basohli in 1630 A.D. His son Raja Sangram Paul who ascended the throne in 1643 A.D. further extended the palace. But it was during the reign of Raja Mahinder Paul born in 1784 A.D. that the two magnificent palaces i.e. *Rang Mahal* and *Sheesh Mahal* were constructed.⁴

It was in the year 1909 *Vikrami*, when Basohli's last ruler was on the throne that the front wall of the inner palace tumbled down at that very time, when he brought his second bride inside the palace. That was the beginning of the end of these glorious palaces.⁵

In the reign of Raja Bhupinder Paul (1813-1834), the Basohli state was attacked by the Sikh Army several times, in these attacks the Basohli

2. Kalhan, *Rajtarangini* (a chronicle of the kings of Kashmir), translated by M.A. Stein, Vol.2, Motilal Banarsi Dass, Delhi-1900, 61, 72, pp. 220, 270, 588-90.

3. Sachau, E.C. (Tr.), *Alberuni's India*, London, 1914, p. 205.

4. Bates, C.E., *A Gazetteer of Kashmir*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 2005.

5. Wakhlu, Somnath, *The Rich Heritage of J&K (Studies in Art Architecture, History and Culture of Region)*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 1998.

fort cum palace was damaged and weakend. While during the reign of Raja Kalyan Paul 1834-1857 A.D. this fort came under the control of Raja Gulab Singh and his brother Raja Suchet Singh and at that time the fort was in ruined condition.

The palace architecture appears to have been a blend of traditional Hindu and Mughal style. It undoubtedly had magnificent towers, wonderful balconies and each room with domed ceilings. Arrangement for heating and cooling of the rooms by a network of pipes was also worked out.

The Mankot principality consists of four forts, located on four different hills which have sufficient place at their tops. The Mankot fort also referred to as Mangarh fort and the fort of Mankot took two years to be constructed.⁶

The other three forts are also known by different names, the fort lying to the west is known as Mahorgarh, the one lying to the east is Babnargarh and the fort which lies in the centre of these two is Dergarh. These groups of forts cover a circle of about 19 kms.

However, local tradition regarding the construction of these forts is conflicting. One tradition ascribes the construction of the forts to Pandavas. But we cannot accept this because on the basis of the architectural design.⁷ The forts can be dated only to 16th century. Another tradition ascribes the construction of the forts to a prince who had rebelled against the authority of Emperor Akbar and hid in these hills. The prince had been considered as the son of the sister of Emperor Akbar. It is, however, difficult to accept that the construction of these forts on such a large scale could have been the work of a hiding prince.

We again find reference to Mankot in 1555 along with the hill territories in Shivalik hills which acted as an asylum for the rulers of Punjab. Another reference regarding the Mankot fort is during the time of Sikander Suri who became the ruler of Punjab with the disintegration of the Sur Empire, founded by Shershah Suri. He in his struggle for power against the Mughal Emperor Humayun frequently took refuge in the fort of Mankot.⁸

6. Chaudhary, J.N., *Shershah and His Successors*, included in R.C. Majumdar (ed.), *The Mughal Empire*.

7. Charak, Sukhdev Singh, *History and Culture of Himalayan States*, Jay Kay Book House, Jammu, 1997, pp. 61-62.

8. Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, Vol. 2, pp. 79-90.

The forts have as a circumference of four miles. It goes in a circle so that in every direction there are small gates, ruins of which can be seen now. It must have been a great problem to collect the necessary material for building up this huge undertaking. The fort had several majestic gates which must have been no less than 25 ft. height. Main gate is almost 30 feet in height and exceptionally preserved.⁹

It forms an arch on the apex underneath is a big replica of the same arch almost 20 ft. in height. It is masonry work of big sand stones, mortared with lime and other ingredients. On the top of the small arch there is an arched niche 4 feet in length and 2 and a half feet breadth. It must have served an airy window through which cross ventilation was possible during summer.

There was a small gate confronting the slope about half a km. from the main gate. Another gate was in the direction of Mankot about 1¼ km. from the main gate. There is a big tank of water covering almost 15 kanals of the area which is filled by the rain water. It is very deep almost 15 feet at the higher side and 20 feet on the lower side. The reservoir is enclosed in a walled structure and pentagonal in shape. The actual wall at place is so wide that a truck can easily pass over it.

This massive structure resembles the architecture of Lodhi's in many respects. Overhanging supports and brackets bear close resemblance to certain tomb architecture in Delhi. The entrance has two stones on either side with the word 'Allah'. There is no inscription on this gate. Adjacent to the gate, the bastions are equally massive. Down at the end of northern side, there was a place for the chief. A small stream which is only alive in the rainy season inroads right in the centre of this place, so the life of the building is very insecure. At a little distance there is a watch tower to look out for the approaching enemy. There is an inscription on another gate which is all covered with vegetation. The inscription is on the right hand side and is mostly obliterated by percolating water from above. It is called Devgarh. It also stands in continuation to the fortress.

Under the circumstances, it appears that these forts were planned without the economic consideration. And only the strategical point of view these forts were planned so that enemy could not access or approach the fort easily. As a result of this, the forts could not flourish for long. Perhaps, when Bairam Khan conquered the area from Sikander Suri, he might have

9. Choudhary, Poonam, *Forts of Jammu Region* (Ph.D. Thesis), p. 173.

ordered the destruction of their defence line with the intention to make them vulnerable at the time of future revolts by its occupants. It seems that it soon lost all strategic importance.

At Jasrota we have a fortified town on the same pattern as that of old Jammu. From the size of the fortress one would feel that the state of Jasrota was very rich. Like other places of Jammu, we have certain legends associated with the foundation of Jasrota. According to Nargis,¹⁰ the author of *Tarikh-i-dogra desh*, "When the foundation stone of new Jasrota was about to be laid, a funeral procession of an untouchable passed the point where later on Delhi Darwaza was constructed. The *purohit* of raja Dhruvdev, thinking this to be inauspicious returned without laying the foundation stone. Then the astrologer, who had predicted the time as to when the foundation stone should be laid, told the king that the auspicious moment had already passed. Had the foundation of the town been laid at that moment, which had passed and then the town would have flourished for several thousand years. But he informed the king that even then it was not too late if the foundation could be laid immediately." Thus, the foundation of the new town of Jasrota was laid by the orders of Dhruv Dev. He also ordered the construction of a palace. It took almost ten years for the fort to complete and the new township to develop.

The fortress Jasrota was a big one as can be seen from its present remains. Even the history of the place tells us that the place was quite important in its hey days. Regarding the construction of the fort, Nargis tells us that when Karandev became the ruler of Jasrota, he got his palaces constructed in the fort on a small hillock, which were later converted into a rest house. *Akbarnama* also makes mention to the existing fortress as well as small fort which was constructed on a small hillock.

When we come to the period of raja Pratapdev, who might have ruled in around 14th century A.D., there was a division of the territory of Jasrota into two parts i.e. Jasrota and Lakhanpur. River Ujh was fixed as a boundary between two states. During the time of the Mughals in 1596 A.D., Mughal forces captured the fort of Jasrota and set the place on fire. It is a matter of considerable surprise that the local chronicles do not refer to the said events.

Akbarnama states :¹¹ "When the army reached Jaruna (Jasrota) — the native place of Babu — his sons, brethren and friends gathered together

10. Nargis, Narsinghdass, *Tarikh-i-Dogra Des*, Chand Press, Jammu, 1969.

11. Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, Vol. 2, *op. cit.*

and took up a strong position at small fort on a hill. This hill was covered with jungles from top to bottom with only one narrow way along which one or two horsemen might pass. On each side of this road there was a wall with loopholes through which muskets could be fired, and arrows shot upon strangers and foes, to prevent their approach. At the bottom of the hill on the level ground there was a cultivated tract in which there was a fort with moat."

At present the Jasrota palace is in total ruins and deserted. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had given Jasrota in *jagir* to Raja Hira Singh who had built a palace for himself on top of the hill. It was entirely of brick masonry. Roofs have crumbled down. The few walls which still stand are plastered with white gypsum, decorated with false niches and doors and floral and line drawings in colour. Of the old constructions only a very large tank lined with dressed sand-stones exists near the palace ruins. Portions of fortification walls along the foot of the hill on the south side are also to be seen. It is pierced by an entrance through which the path ascends leading to the palace. The fortification walls on both sides of this path referred to in the *Akbarnama* have disappeared. However, their traces still exist in the form of dressed boulders and masonry fragments lying here and there on its both sides. The bases of a few stone towers are also to be seen. The grandeur of the days of Raja Dhruv Dev of Jasrota and Raja Balwant Singh had become a thing of the past as Raja Hira Singh had abandoned the place and built for himself a fort — palace known as Jasmergarh near the Hiranagar town which he founded in about 1836 A.D.

Lakhanpur as a state was created in around 14th century A.D. The local chronicles as well as Hutchinson and Vogel mention that after the death of Kalasdev of Jasrota,¹² a dispute over the succession arose between his two sons namely Pratap Dev and Sangram Dev. Pratap Dev being the eldest of the two became the ruler of Jasrota and Sangram Dev put a claim on half of the state. When the matter became worse the neighbouring Rajas and the elders of the state intervened and brought about reconciliation between the two brothers. Pratap Dev, therefore, agreed to give Sangram Dev, the territory lying between Ujh and Ravi. Thus, a separate state was created and Lakhanpur was made its capital. The descendants of Sangram Dev became famous as Lakhanpurias. Sangram Dev is then said to have got

12. Hutchinson, J.Ph. Vogel, *History of Punjab Hill State*, Vol. 2, Director of Languages and Cultures, H.P. (Shimla).

a fort constructed on a small hill for the residence of his family.¹³

The existing remains of the fort of Lakhanpur belong to 18th century, according to Nargis. The remains of the fort which was constructed by Sangram Pal in around 14th century A.D. are now not available. The statement of Nargis appears to be true because the present remains available at Lakhanpur do not appear to be very old. Besides this, it is difficult to call it a fort and appears as an ordinary watch station.

The fort of Jasmergarh is situated between the Tarnah and Bein Nalas. It is in the present Hiranagar tehsil of Kathua district, which now has been converted into a jail. The present ruined fort was built by Raja Lal Dev between 1814 A.D. and 1830 A.D. and was later strengthened by Raja Hira Singh.¹⁴ The fort was a large square edifice, with a broken ground around it and only slightly higher than the neighbouring *tillas*. It had one large *deodhi* or gateway towards south, and within the *deodhi*, the space is empty, except for a row of brick built dwelling cells and stores. There are rooms under the ramparts all round, except on the east and south-east side. At the north-east corner was a very deep and fine well, built of bricks and having a good supply of water.¹⁵

In the present era of globalization, protection and documentation of the built heritage is the main issue of concern. The various government and non-government organizations are working globally for the conservation and documentation of such sites. At national level the institution such as Archaeological Survey of India (A.S.I.) exist to ensure the conservation and documentation of monuments of historical importance, however A.S.I. has not been successful in documenting the heritage of Kathua district. The Jasrota fort, which was declared a heritage site by the state government is on the verge of destruction. Most of the heritage sites of the regions are neglected and deteriorating gradually due to various factors.

Awareness campaign needs to be carried out in order to make people aware of the importance of their heritage. Tourism department with the help of A.S.I. should put the heritage sites on tourist map so as to generate income for their maintenance. Keeping in mind the condition of the heritage of the region, I have tried to document the forts of Kathua region but there is need to take up a detailed study of the heritage of the region.

13. Charak, S.D.S., Anita Bilawaria, *History and Culture of Himalayan States*, Vol. IV, J.K. Book House, Jammu, 1997.

14. *Gazetteer of Kashmir*, Vivek Publication, Delhi, 1979, p. 404.

15. Interview with D.C. Parshant (Former M.L.A., Journalist, writer), March 2008.

GENDER ISSUES AND CONCERNS IN HUKAMNAMAS AND RAHITNAMAS : AN OVERVIEW

Nirapjit Parmar*

Hukamnama, is a compound of two Persian words *Hukm*, meaning *Command* or *order* and *namah* meaning *Letter*.¹ McLeod's *Historical Dictionary of Sikhism* defines the *Hukamnama* as a 'Letter of Command'. Literally, these were documents sent from the time of Guru Hargobind to *Sangats* or individuals, giving instructions or requesting assistance.² The *Hukamnamas* are an important source of Sikh history. Most scholars consider them a valuable source of evidence on the life and mission of the Sikh Gurus. They throw light on the organization of the Sikh congregations and also provide invaluable insights on a number of issues related to the Sikh Panth.³ The first *Hukamnama* from the Akal Takhat was issued by Guru Hargobind Sahib himself. This *Hukamnama* directed the Sikhs to wear arms for self defence. Since then, many *Hukamnamas* have been issued.

In 1998 a very important *Hukamnama* was issued regarding the respect that should be shown to *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.⁴ Currently, the word also applies to edicts issued from time to time from the five *Takhats* or seats of high religious authorities for the Sikhs.⁵

From the very beginning, tremendous amount of religious importance has been attached to the *Hukamnamas* issued by the Sikh Gurus. These *Hukamnamas* were both received and obeyed by with great religious fervour and respect by the Sikh congregations assembled in the Gurudwaras to whom they were addressed and read out aloud. Sikhs considered adherence to these *Hukamnamas* as their religious duty.

The *Hukamnamas* were issued for a variety of reasons from time to time, such as those relating to the Guru's kitchen, donation to run religious

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1. <http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Hukamnama>.
2. McLeod, W.H., *Historical Dictionary of Sikhism*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1995, p. 107.
3. <http://www.bagchee.com/books.php?id=47677>.
4. http://satkar.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=18&Itemid=34.
5. <http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Hukamnama>.

centres, in order to cater to the needs of the Sikh congregation, for the purchase of arms and ammunition, instructions about preaching, reconciliation between dissident factions, communication between the Guru and his *Sangat*, or in happier times, invitations to meet the Guru and warnings to the *Masands*, etc. Over a period of time, these *Hukamnamas* acquired historical value alongwith religious significance.⁶

Many of the *Hukamnamas* which were lost during the period of Sikh struggle could have been useful in the writing of Sikh history.⁷ During the times of the Sikh Gurus, many faithful Sikhs would get copies of the *Guru Granth Sahib* handwritten and carry them along while coming to meet the Sikh Guru. They would then humbly request the Guru to leave their handwritten impression on a copy of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The Gurus did not write their names on it but obliged their followers by writing either "*Ik Omkar Gursat*", "*Ik Omkar Satguru Prasad*", etc. These came to be known as '*Nisans*'/memoirs of the Gurus.⁸

All *Hukamnamas* were originally written in Punjabi, in Gurmukhi characters. Those of Guru Hargobind and also most of Guru Tegh Bahadur's are believed to have been written in their own hand.⁹ The *Nisans* and *Hukamnamas* of the ninth Guru constitute a fresh source of evidence regarding his life and work. The *Nisan* is primarily a special piece of writing in the Guru's own hand carrying the authority of the Master and on that account is a sort of a seal on epistles. The *Nisan* thus helps in authentication of epistles.¹⁰ The *Hukamnamas* of the ninth Guru are found to be useful in many respects.¹¹ *Hukamnamas* also provide specimens of Punjabi prose of the 17th C.¹² On the one hand these *Hukamnamas* largely and strongly exposed corruption amongst the *Masands* and on the other hand, urged the people to make direct offerings to the Guru. Further these

6. Singh, Ganda (ed.), *Hukamname, Guru Sahiban, Mata Sahiban, Banda Singh and Khalsa Ji De*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1999, p. 5.

7. Singh, Ganda (ed.), *Hukamname, Guru Sahiban, Mata Sahiban, Banda Singh and Khalsa Ji De*, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1999, p. 6.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

9. <http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php?title=Hukamnama>.

10. Singh, Fauja (ed.), *Hukamnamas, Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib* (Punjabi, Hindi, English), Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1996, p. 34.

11. Singh, Ganda (ed.), *Hukamnamas, Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib* (Punjabi, Hindi, English), Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1996, p. 35.

12. Singh, Ganda (ed.), *Hukamnamas, Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib* (Punjabi, Hindi, English), Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1996, p. 36.

Hukamnamas also throw light on the economic conditions of the different parts of the region. *Hukamnamas* also reflect upon the close relationship that existed between the Guru and his Sikhs, as the Guru calls them by name.¹³

Significantly, there is no gender bias in the issuance of the *Hukamnamas*. It may be noted here that such *Hukamnamas* were also issued by Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Devi, a fact which is in itself self-explanatory of the stand taken by the Sikh Gurus regarding the upliftment of women and also the respect and reverence displayed by the Sikh *Sangat* in obeying these *Hukamnamas*. The *Hukamnamas* issued by the Guru *Mahals* did not deter the Sikh *sangat* from following them with equal zeal and fervour as in the cases of *Hukamnamas* issued by the Sikh Gurus themselves. Also the Guru *Mahals* were considered capable enough of taking decisions for the betterment of the *Panth*.

RAHITNAMAS

Rahitname plural of *rahitnama* (*rahit* = conduct, stipulated conduct or way of life; *name* : letters, writings, manuals) is a term used in Punjabi in reference to a genre of writings specifying authentic way of life for a Sikh. These writings, enunciating conduct and behaviour in accordance with the principles of the Sikh religion contain instructions regarding personal and social behaviour, applicable especially to those who have been admitted to the Khalsa brotherhood through baptism. Sikhism laid as much stress on correct personal conduct as on the purity of mind. Guru Nanak for whom truth is synonymous with God recognizes the sovereignty of conduct (GG, 62). "His conduct will alone be pure who cherishes Him in his heart," says Guru Nanak in another of his hymns (GG, 831). And "*rahini*, i.e. conduct moulded in accordance with *shabad*, is the truest conduct" (GG, 56). *Rahit* as right thinking and right action is also distinguished from *rahit* as outward formal appearance by Guru Arjan, Nanak V : "(The misguided one) acts differently from the *rahit* he proclaims; he pretends love (for God) without devotion in his heart; (but) the Omniscient Lord knows all and is not beguiled by external form" (GG, 169). Besides these general statements, more specific instructions for the moral guidance of a believer are found throughout the Sikh scriptures.¹⁴

The *Rahitnamas* are manuals of *Rahit* principles, spelling out what a Sikh may do and what he should avoid. They are, in other words, works

13. <http://www.info-sikh.com/PageG8.html>.

14. <http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Rahitname>.

which claim to record the *Rahit* as it was delivered by Guru Gobind Singh at the founding of the Khalsa order. Several *Rahitnamas* exist, out of which six deserve close analysis, says McLeod. Two are attributed to Nand Lal, and one each to Prahilad Rai (or Prahilad Singh), Chaupa Singh, Desa Singh and Daya Singh. In addition to these there are later *Rahitnamas* such as the *Prem Sumarg* and two *Rahitnamas* set in the *Sau Sakhian*.¹⁵ The *Rahit*, according to McLeod, is the code of belief and conduct which all members of the Khalsa are required to obey.¹⁶

The literature containing the *rahit* can broadly be divided into three categories — the textual source which includes Sikh scriptures, other approved Sikh canon, and hukamnamas; the traditional Sikh history including *janamsakhis*, *gurbilases* and Guru Gobind Singh's own announcement not to have a personal successor and to pass on the guruship jointly and permanently to the *Guru Granth Sahib* and the *Panth* (Khalsa Brotherhood). The textual sources with such precepts as can be extrapolated from them are accepted as general constituents of the Sikh *rahit*. Among the sources of traditional Sikh history, the most important are the utterances traced directly to the Gurus, especially Guru Gobind Singh who laid down, at the time of the inauguration of the Khalsa in 1699, rules of conduct and introduced regulations to confer upon his followers a distinctive identity. However, these sources do not, strictly speaking, belong to the genre known as *rahitnamas*.

Bhai Nand Lal and some other Sikhs contemporary or near contemporary with Guru Gobind Singh compiled the first *Rahitnamas*. The Chief Khalsa Diwan's *Gurmat Prakash Bhag Sanskar* (Amritsar, 1915), Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee's *Sikh Rahit Maryada* (Amritsar, 1950) and the English translation *Rahit Maryada : A Guide to the Sikh Way of Life* (London, 1971) are the modern versions of *rahitnamas*. The authorship and dates of composition of some of the latter-day *rahitnamas* are disputary, interpolations are not ruled out, either. Most of these works are ascribed to Sikhs closely connected with Guru Gobind Singh; they are in some instances described as dictated or authenticated by the Guru himself.¹⁷

15. McLeod, W.H. (ed.), *Essays in Sikh History, Tradition and Society*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2007, pp. 127-128.

16. McLeod, W.H., *Sikhs of the Khalsa : A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005, p. 4.

17. <http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Rahitname>.

Three of Bhai Nand Lal's works fall in the category of *rahitnamas*. *Rahitnama Bhai Nand Lal*, in Sadhukari verse, is in the form of a dialogue between the poet and Guru Gobind Singh during which the latter expounds the rules of conduct laid down for a Gursikh or true follower of the faith. The penultimate verse (22) of the *Rahitnama* indicates that this dialogue took place at Anandpur on 5 December 1695, i.e. before the creation of the Khalsa.¹⁸ This *Rahitnama* is of two stanzas and is written in Punjabi.¹⁹ Also known as *Sakhi Rahit Ki*, was possibly written in the mid 1730s. It gives an impression of peaceful times, which are not easily reconciled with the middle years of the eighteenth century.²⁰

Sakhi Rahit Ki clearly talks about the treatment of women, wherein there are contradictory views, on the one hand, it says, "never trust a woman," and on the other, asks not to cast lecherous eyes on the women of another man's family.²¹ In addition the *Rahitnama* provides general instructions to be followed by the Khalsa Sikhs and deals in detail with the daily discipline expected of all Sikhs.²² The *Rahitnama* stresses upon the importance of the performance of the daily prayers (*Nitnem*) by the Sikhs.

The *Tankhah-nama* of Bhai Nand Lal consisting of 62 couplets, was composed after the creation of the Khalsa and is in question-answer form.²³

It deals directly with rules and injunctions, especially those breach of which attracts a religious penalty, *tankhah* in Sikh terminology. Punishment prescribed in this *Tankhahnama* is neither corporeal nor pecuniary, but consists in Guru's displeasure or imprecation. Besides religious and moral practices of a general nature, it alludes to rules of personal and social etiquette, even of personal hygiene. The last verse of *Tankhahnama*, which the Sikhs usually recite in unison after *ardas*, contains the well-familiar litany, *Raj karega khalsa*.²⁴ The *Tankhahnama* lays down rules of conduct

18. *Ibid.*

19. Kapoor, Sukhbir Singh, Mohinder Kaur Kapoor, *The Making of the Sikh Rehatnamas : The Sikh Code of Conduct*, Hemkunt Publishers (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 2008, p. 11.

20. McLeod W.H., *Sikhs of the Khalsa : A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005, p. 91.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 93.

23. Kapoor, Sukhbir Singh, Mohinder Kaur Kapoor, *The Making of the Sikh Rehatnamas : The Sikh Code of Conduct*, Hemkunt Publishers (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 2008, p. 17.

24. <http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index/php/Rahitname>.

to be religiously followed by a Sikh of the Khalsa, relating to the duties and privileges of the Khalsa, doctrine and devotion, dress and outward appearance, bathing and personal hygiene, crimes and misdemeanours, social relationships, charity, Sangat, *Guru Granth Sahib*, rituals, preparation of *Karah Prasad*, preparation and consumption of food, weapons and warfare, dangers of being in the company of false teachers, attitude towards hindus, attitude towards muslims and some sundry prohibitions.²⁵

Regarding gender issues and concerns, the *Rahitnamas* very openly, though briefly, discuss the attitudes to be developed towards women by a member of the Khalsa.

In McLeod's view, the issue of the sexual morality of the Khalsa is strongly emphasized and an equally strict message regarding the same appears in this *rahitnama*.²⁶

"Do not look with lustful eyes on women who enter the sangat. A Khalsa must not have sexual relations with any woman other than his wife. Do not visit a prostitute, nor show affection for another's wife. Do not seduce the Guru's wife."²⁷ A Sikh is further warned against marrying off one's daughter to a non-Khalsa Sikh.

"Accept no price for your daughter's or sister's hand."²⁸

The *Prahlad Rai Rahitnama*, was written by Prahlad Rai, a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh. He was a renowned scholar who translated 50 *Upanishads* into vernacular language on the instructions of Guru Gobind Singh. This *Rahitnama* is believed to have been written after the birth of the Khalsa at Nanded.²⁹ The *Prahlad Rai Rahitnama*, describes the nature of the Khalsa, while simultaneously laying down the rules of behaviour for a Khalsa Sikh. A strict instruction given here is to never visit a prostitute. Sikhs of the Khalsa are further restrained from dealing with the Minas, followers of the Masands, those who cut their hair or those who kill their daughters.³⁰

25. McLeod, W.H., *Sikhs of the Khalsa : A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005, pp. 83-86.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

29. Kapoor, Sukhbir Singh, Mohinder Kaur Kapoor, *The Making of the Sikh Rehatnamas: The Sikh Code of Conduct*, Hemkunt Publishers (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 2008, p. 59.

30. McLeod, W.H., *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.

Female infanticide is introduced for the first time and Khalsa Sikhs should have no dealings with those who practice it, writes McLeod.³¹ Existence of female infanticide amongst the Sikhs is provided adequate support by this *Rahitnama* and the fact that the *Rahitnamas* denounced it strongly indicates the stand taken by the religion against gender discrimination. Status of a woman is upheld in Sikhism by outright condemnation of the practice of female infanticide.

Rahitnama Bhai Daya Singh presents in prose, to begin with, the rules of conduct as coming from the lips of Guru Gobind Singh himself; in this case the author is the first among the *Panj Piare*.³² According to McLeod, amongst all the *Rahitnamas* this is perhaps the most difficult one to analyse.³³ Issues relating to marriage, are discussed here and the Sikhs are instructed not to marry their daughters and sisters outside the Khalsa *Panth*. Polygamy, adultery and prostitution are strictly denounced.³⁴

Rahitnama Hazuri, also called *Rahitnama Bhai Chaupa Singh*, is the most elaborate statement of rules of conduct for the Sikhs. Its authorship is traditionally ascribed to Bhai Chaupa Singh Chhibbar, who had been in attendance upon Guru Gobind Singh since his (the Guru's) childhood. The work was, according to internal evidence, authenticated by Guru Gobind Singh on 7 Jeth 1757 BK/5 May 1700 A.D. Of the 1800 injunctions contained in the *Rahitnama* the main ones are : A Sikh should regularly say his *nitnem*, and be always alert in attending to his duty and earn his living by the labour of his hands; he should have no dealing with minas, masands, ramraias, the shaven ones, and with those who practise female infanticide; he should not drink liquor; he should never be parted from the five, viz. *kachchh* (shorts), *kes* (hair), *kirpan* (sword), *bani* and *sangat*, he should not use nor deal in tobacco and should not give his daughter in marriage to one who smokes; he should regularly set aside *dasvandh* or tithe, and he should not trade in *pothis* or manuscript copies of gurbani. A special feature of *Rahitnama Hazuri* is a section devoted to Sikh women. The *Rahitnama* contains a classic catalogue of Sikh characteristics and virtues. However, the extant texts of the *Rahitnama* are adulterated and contain injunctions

31. McLeod, W.H., *Sikhs of the Khalsa : A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005, p. 90.

32. <http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Rahitname>.

33. McLeod, W.H., *op.cit.*, p. 122.

34. *Ibid*, pp. 126-127.

which are in conflict with approved Sikh teaching.³⁵ The *Chaupa Singh Rahitnama* favours a wider Sikh understanding rather than the distinctively Khalsa mode. It addresses the injunctions to the loyal *Gursikh* rather than to a specifically Khalsa Sikh.³⁶ Female infanticide is not only condemned once again, but others are instructed not to have any dealings with anyone who has committed this unpardonable offence. Various aspects of sexual morality are also discussed.³⁷

Regarding the treatment of women, it is said, "A *Gursikh* should never trust a woman, neither his own nor another's. Never entrust a secret to them. Regard them as the embodiment of deceit. Never keep company of women belonging to another man's family. Never touch the feet of any woman other than one's own mother. Never eat food left by a woman. Never curse a respectable woman nor use weapons against any of them."³⁸ Marriage rites similar to those listed by the other *Rahitnamas* are also given in the *Chaupa Singh Rahitnama*. The *Rahitnama* goes on to discuss in detail the duties of women, her role in cooking and serving food, their role in religious matters and their social relationships. These in turn are given in a detailed form by W.H. McLeod in his *Sikhs of the Khalsa : A History of the Khalsa Rahit*. Infidelity is severely condemned.

A *Gursikhni* is to imbibe high moral and social character, not indulging in the ordinary vices which generally mar the personality of women. She is not to be abusive, obscene or violent at any cost. Complete hygiene both personal and of the surroundings is to be maintained by a *Gursikhni* while cooking and serving food. She should have bathed properly before saying her daily prayers. Regarding her social behaviour, a *Gursikhni* is not to interact with men who are not a part of her own family. She is not to intermingle with malicious women and stay away from gossiping. Social contacts with the Five Reprobate Groups (*panj mel*) are also to be avoided.³⁹ In McLeod's view, although the *Chaupa Singh Rahitnama* is unique in allocating a lengthy section to the duties of female members of the Khalsa, the author staunchly upholds patriarchy. Initiation can never be conferred on women.⁴⁰ However, the extant texts of the *Rahitnama* are

35. <http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Rahitname>.

36. McLeod, W.H., *op.cit.*, p. 95.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

38. McLeod, W.H., *op.cit.*, p. 102.

39. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

adulterated and contain injunctions which are in conflict with approved Sikh teachings. The presence of strong Puranic element and the influence of the Devi cult are some of the other possible corruptions in the extant texts.⁴¹

Rahitnama Bhai Desa Singh is admittedly a late-18th century work. It is in the form of a long poem of 146 couplets and short four-line stanzas. The poet states that he had lived in Bunga Maralivala at Amritsar where Sardar Jassa Singh (Ahluwalia) had also lived for a long time. From there, in old age, he visited Patna. During his travels after that, he once in a dream was ordered by Guru Gobind Singh to write down a code of conduct for the Sikhs. Bhai Desa Singh lays particular stress on the following points : a Sikh must receive the rites of the Khalsa by ceremony of the double-edged sword; should devote himself to *bani* and refrain from backbiting and slander; should use *vahiguruji ki fateh* as the form of salutation and greeting; should recite regularly ordered texts; should treat all women other than his wife as daughters or mothers; must maintain the five symbols of the Sikhs.⁴² It is in poetry form and has 146 couplets.⁴³

This *Rahitnama* underlines the significance of the *Rahit*. Once again issues of female infanticide, prostitution, adultery and sexual morality are discussed. Respect is to be shown towards treatment of women.

Doris, in her *Relocating Gender in Sikh History : Transformation, Meaning and Identity*, analyses only the *Chaupa Singh Rahit*, with regard to the issue of gender. In general, her observation on the six *Rahitnamas* is that they consist of an extensive amount of information pointing to an increased differentiation between women and men in the Sikh community. She further observes that the rules outlined for the Guru's Sikhs make it increasingly clear that women simply were not included in the 'regular' discipline outlined for the Khalsa. Notions of impurity, which the earliest Guru had strictly censured, were here also associated with women, as was scepticism with regard to the credibility of women. Penance was also required by a man who ate food left over by a woman. According to her, the *Rahitnamas* give the impression of widening the gulf between male and female Sikhs through subtle ways.⁴⁴

41. <http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Rahitname>.

42. *Ibid.*

43. Kapoor, Sukhbir Singh, Mohinder Kaur Kapoor, *The Making of the Sikh Rehatnamas : The Sikh Code of Conduct*, Hemkunt Publishers (P) Ltd., New Delhi, 2008, p. 37.

44. Jakobsh Doris R., *Relocating Gender in Sikh History : Transformation, Meaning and Identity*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2003, pp. 46-47.

Among Sikhs, *Rahit* means a discipline which they are required to follow in their daily life. It represents their life-style and is an index of their world-view. *Nama* means a writing or a manual. *Rahitnama* is, therefore, a codified statement of Sikhs' conduct in life. It is supposed to be a comprehensive list of do's and don'ts, prescribing how a follower should respond or behave in particular situations. While all the Gurus had stressed virtuous conduct in religious life, Guru Gobind Singh is credited with having said, "He alone is my Sikh who follows the *rahit*. In fact he is the Master and I am his disciple." Extensive references to man's conduct in Gurbani and the *vars* of Bhai Gurdas show that a distinct Sikh way of life had emerged by the end of the 17th century, with emphasis on internal as well as external *rahit*. The Guru says : "He who sports *kes* without the *rahit* of *pahul*, is a fool and an imposter; I will not see him. He is a sinner, And he should drop his 'garb'." The guidelines were perhaps not put together in a systematic manner. In 1699, however, when Guru Gobind Singh launched the Khalsa Order, promulgation of detailed injunctions for the initiates to follow was an imperative need. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that some kind of *rahitnama* was drafted. This was all the more necessary, since large numbers of disciples had to be initiated through the *Amrit* ceremony by several teams or *jathas* of *Panj Piaras*, and uniformity of injunctions had to be ensured. This assumption is shared by all scholars including Piara Singh Padam and W.H. McLeod. Unfortunately, no such record is traceable. All the extant manuscripts of *rahitnamas* date back to a later period, although most of them claim to have been commissioned or approved by Guru Gobind Singh himself. Chaupa Singh's *Rahitnama* is no exception. Its extant versions have been dated between 1740 and 1765 CE.⁴⁵

The *Rahit* involves both a belief as well as a perspective as for more than three centuries most Sikhs have regarded the *Rahit* as absolutely central to their faith.⁴⁶ The *Rahit* thus becomes an integral part of the daily life of a devout Khalsa Sikh. In McLeod's view, the *Rahitnamas* represent the normative standard of Sikh belief and behaviour. They do not project the beliefs of an ordinary Sikh, nor do they describe the ordinary Sikh's way of life. The *Rahitnamas* however supply what their authors regarded as the ideal standard for a Khalsa Sikh.⁴⁷ Regarding gender issues and concerns in

45. <http://www.sikhism.us/hard-talk/76-the-chaupa-singh-rahitnama.html>.

46. McLeod, W.H., *Sikhs of the Khalsa : A History of the Khalsa Rahit*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2005, p. 3.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

the *Rahitnamas*, it is to be remembered that since the *Rahitnamas* were a by-product of the creation of the Khalsa Panth in the eighteenth century, they do reflect the generally held social views of the time, one being that the men must fight and women should stay at home. In the late nineteenth century, with the development of the Singh Sabha movement, women's claims to be regarded as fellow-members of the Khalsa largely fell on deaf years. It was only from the mid-twentieth century that women's voices came to be heard again influenced by the feminist movement of western countries.⁴⁸

J.S. Grewal's article "Sikhism and Gender" is written mainly in response to the allegations made by Doris R. Jakobsh in her book, *"Relocating Gender in Sikh History : Transformation, Meaning and Identity"*, regarding Gender issues within the Sikh Panth. In the context of the Sikh *Rahitnamas*, Grewal is of the opinion that the view taken by Jakobsh is partial and therefore, misleading.⁴⁹ Regarding the negative images of women portrayed in certain places, Grewal says that the images of outcaste women are used only contextually for a moral message; to regard evil-mindedness, cruelty, slander and wrath as untouchable.⁵⁰ Referring to Doris's analysis of the *Chaupa Singh Rahit-Nama*, as being a reflection of the attitudes in the tales of 'wiles of women' and that women were not included in the 'regular' discipline outlined for the Khalsa; Grewal goes on to say that this injunction does not imply that religious life was not open to Sikh women.⁵¹ Spiritual life was open to women.⁵² Doris further goes on to label women as 'secondary' Sikhs, which is only due to lack of proper analysis of the *Rahitnama* as a whole for gender relations. An indepth analysis would lead to the argument that women remained respectable members of the Khalsa social order as much as of the earlier Sikh social order.⁵³

48. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

49. Grewal J.S., "Sikhism and Gender," *The Sikhs : Ideology, Institutions and Identity*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2009, p. 210.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

ZAFARNAMA : ITS HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

Navdeep Kaur*

Zafarnama, though, meant to be addressed and sent to Aurangzeb, the Emperor of India, begins with eulogy of Lord Akal. It is a letter of protest written by Guru Gobind Singh.¹ The *Zafarnama*, or epistle of victory, was written, paradoxically enough, in the dark hour of defeat.² After the battle of Chamkaur, Guru Gobind Singh reached Dina,³ passing through Jatpura, Chakhar, Takhatpura, Madheh and Khangar. Sikh tradition holds that the Guru was given warm welcome by Lakhmir, and Shamir, the Chaudhries of Dina. The Guru was put up in the house of Bhai Sharda, a carpenter.

Tradition holds that Guru Gobind Singh received two letters from Emperor Aurangzeb at Anandpur and third at Dina. The contents of the letter are unknown to the history. Albeit, Macauliffe, without quoting his source of information, gives the contents thereof,⁴ the authenticity of the details of which is quite doubtful. However, the points which figured in the letter were that the emperor wanted the Guru to evacuate Anandpur and to see him in the Deccan.

Even if we do not consider that the letter written by Guru Gobind Singh was in reply to the correspondence made by Emperor Aurangzeb with the Guru, the fact remains that the Guru wrote a letter, popularly known as *Zafarnama*, which is by all means a historic letter.

The Guru sent this letter to Emperor Aurangzeb through his trusted

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1. Dharam Pal Ashta, *The Poetry of Dasam Granth*, Delhi, 1959, p. 166.
2. C.H. Leohlin, *The Granth of Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa Brotherhood*, Lucknow, 1971, p. 54.
3. Dina is 46 kilometers in the south-east of Moga and 30 kilometers from Rampura Phul Railway station situated on Ambala-Bathinda railway line is presently in Faridkot district. According to Mohammad Hasan, Dina, the founder of this village was the descendant of Rao Jundhar, the head of Hissar government. Mohammad Hassan, *Tarikh-i-Patiala*, Amritsar, 1878, p. 30; Balwant Singh Sidhu, *Braran da Itihas*, Patiala, 1988, p. 22.
4. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion : Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*, Vol. V, Oxford, 1986, p. 155.

Sikhs, Bhai Daya Singh and Dharam Singh,⁵ who in the absence of modern facilities of transport and communication, set out on a long journey of about 600 kilometers, from Dina to Ahmadnagar, where the emperor was engaged in quelling disturbances. They took some months to reach there experiencing a great difficulty in delivering the letter to Aurangzeb. Ultimately, with the assistance of the local Sikhs, the letter was successfully managed to be delivered to the Emperor in person.⁶

It is written in the Persian language, rhymed Persian, but in *Gurmukhi* letters.⁷ The *Zafarnama* has three parts and composed in one hundred and eleven *Baits* or couplets.⁸ In the use of language, the Guru is lucid, frank, ruthless and economical.

The first part of *Zafarnama* consists of twelve couplets, an invocation to God to resolve his difficulties. It begins with the eulogy of Lord Akal. These couplets dwell on some of the virtues of the Gracious Sovran who is the Lord of infinite virtue, the Creator, the Sustainer, the Liberator, the Guider, the Doer, the Knower, the Bestower, the Wonder worker, the Adorable, the Immaculate, the Beauteous, the Forgiver, the Defender and Exalter of the lowly.⁹ The second part contains sixty six verses, thirteen to eighty eight. In the beginning he condemns the emperor for his failure as ruler for his communalism, for his breach of faith and treachery against taking an oath on the *Quran*. In third part the Guru praises Aurangzeb for certain qualities in his character. Second and third part of *Zafarnama* is named as *Dastaan*.

In *Dastaan* the Guru turns his attention to Aurangzeb the Emperor and the man. With precision of a very fine Surgeon he lays bare the soul, heart and mind of Aurangzeb, for Aurangzeb himself to see. The *Dastaan* opens with proven lack of faith in the words of Aurangzeb, whether given in the name of God or the holy *Quran*.¹⁰ The Guru told emperor that he had no faith in his oaths, which he had taken in the name of the prophet and God. It was a severe indictment of Aurangzeb who has repeatedly been chided for breach of

5. Senapat, *Sri Gur Sobha*, (ed.) Ganda Singh, Punjabi University Patiala, 1967, p. 87; Koer Singh, *Gurbilas Patshai Das (1751)*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1968, p. 221; Sukha Singh, *Gur Bilas Dasvin Patshahi (1797)*, Languages Department Punjab, Patiala, 1971, pp. 333-36.

6. Koer Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 223; Sukha Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 338; Macauliffe, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

7. C.H. Leohlin, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

8. Dharampal Ashta, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

9. Surinderjit Singh, *Guru Gobind Singh Zafarnama*, Amritsar, 2003, p. 27.

10. *Ibid.*

faith caused by an attack by the Mughal troops on the Sikhs after he had vacated Anandpur on solemn assurances given to them by him and his officers.

The Guru writes:

The *bakhshis* and *diwan* of the emperor were liars and were not true to the oaths taken the holy *Quran*.¹¹

The Guru Argues:

Had I worn on *Quran*, even secretly, I would have abided by that but you did not.¹² Let me know how could I believe your oaths.¹³ God shows the right path to those who believe in the oath of *Quran*.¹⁴ I believe you are a liar throwing away your religion and faith to the winds.¹⁵ A man who is firm believer of religion stands by his promise.¹⁶

The Guru further wrote that he had received the emperor's letter and verbal message through his officials.¹⁷ "He should ease the situation and bring the matter to peaceful end. He should be true to his thought and word."¹⁸ The Guru was never in the favour of fighting and bloodshed. He always wanted to settle down the disputes in an amicable and peaceful manner. He further adds:

"When all means fail, it is lawful to hold a sword in one's hand as a last resort".¹⁹

The emphasis is on 'the last resort' rather than to make an offensive attack. Regarding the battle of Chamkaur the Guru says: "After all how could my men carry on the fight, when only forty of them were attacked by a countless horde."²⁰

The contents of the *Zafarnama* show that the bigoted Emperor was biased, cunning and hypocrite. The Guru chides the Emperor for having acted against God and the prophet: "you are faithless and irreligious".²¹ The Guru described Aurangzeb as 'oath breaker and deceitful man whose oaths on the Quran were fraudulent and meaningless. He very boldly informs him: "Even

11. *Zafarnama*, Verses 13-14.

12. *Ibid.*, Verse, 18.

13. *Ibid.*, Verse, 19.

14. *Ibid.*, Verse, 43.

15. *Ibid.*, Verse, 45.

16. *Ibid.*, Verse, 47.

17. *Ibid.*, Verses, 53-54.

18. *Ibid.*, Verse, 55.

19. *Ibid.*, Verse, 22, "Chu Kar Az Ham Hilate Darguzast, Halal ast Burdan ba Shamshir Dast."

20. *Ibid.*, Verse, 41.

21. *Ibid.*, Verse, 46.

if you swear a hundred times on the *Quran*, I won't trust you for a single moment".²²

As the limitations or compulsions of the letter demanded, the Guru had to be very concise and brief. Then the Guru makes the mention of the battle of Chamkaur in the *Zafarnama*. He was taken by surprise and forced into the pitched battle with only forty of his serving comrades against over whelming odds. All his comrades as well as his two sons were killed in the action.²³ *Zafarnama* is the only contemporary source which provides the microscopic study of the battle of Chamkaur.

In 58, 59, 60 and 61 stanzas, Guru reminded Aurangzeb of some vital items of his oath taken. Some writers have tried to give different meaning to 61st couplet opening that the Guru is repeating here and earlier three couplets (58, 59 and 60) the words of Aurangzeb as written on the front-piece of *Quran* sent through his *Qazi*. They infer that it is not the Guru who is addressing Aurangzeb in these couplets. And in this couplet (61) the Guru reminds Aurangzeb about his offering of conferring the title of *Ek-Hazari* (Master of one thousand horse).²⁴ In the next six couplets the Guru takes Aurangzeb to task for his unjust governance, his cruelty, his so called continence religiousness and justice, his heartless killing, his acting unwisely at the suggestions of his courtiers.²⁵

Next, the Guru describes the kingship of the lord. His relentlessness in dealing with nescient the unmindful who like Aurangzeb are not lord-aware, his magnanimity and graciousness as the Sustainer of all beings. His being the true Guide, the true protector and Friend of the lowly in comparison to the Kingship of Aurangzeb. In couplets 87 to 92 the Guru writes about some Good qualities of Aurangzeb but they are not enough to merit consideration in the eyes of the Lord. For they fall far short of being a truly religious and good man. The Guru brings in greater relief the puny power of a malefic mind against the infinite power and grace of Lord Akal in protection of the faithful and lovely. He reminds Aurangzeb the relentless and ruthless gyrations of time, in whose debris are buried countless mighty kings of the past.²⁶

Most of the versions of *Zafarnama*, agree in respect of 108 couplets with slight variations at a few places. There is open disagreement in respect

22. *Ibid.*, Verse, 49.

23. Dharampal Ashta, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

24. Surinderjit Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

of couplets (58, 59, 60) where the latter two of them appear to be interpolations to justify the odd explanation of the first one (61). The latter two are not included in this version, as they are against the spirit and tone of epistle.

The purpose of writing the epistle was clearly to soften down the monarch and hammer home the cruelty and deception practised by him. Through this letter, Guru told Emperor Aurangzeb that he possessed a limited power and the Supreme authority lay in the hands of God. The Guru accused the Emperor and his officials of backing out from their promises and criticised their behaviour. They did not act in the true spirit of religion and in the name of religion they had betrayed the people. The Guru further stated the Emperor, because of his tyranny and high handedness had misled Muslims. The letter was sort of report about the misdeeds of Emperor and his government, rather than a petition as pointed out by some of writers.

However, the *Zafarnama* has been interpreted by some historians and writers according to their own whims and views. Muhammad Latif argues how and why the *Zafarnama* had been written by the Guru. He writes incorrectly as under:

“Towards the close of the reign of Aurangzeb, the Guru lived at peace at Anandpur. But the king, who was then in the Dekhan, always felt anxious about him. He therefore, issued a mandate summoning Guru Gobind to his presence. When the messenger reached and delivered the royal *firman* to him, he kissed it and placed it on his head in token of respect. He treated the messenger with the greatest honour, and told him that he regarded himself as a dependent and vassal of the ‘king of kings’ and that to obey his Majesty’s command would be an honour to him, but that before accompanying the messenger, he would like to submit his grievances to the Emperor in writing”.²⁷ Mohd. Latif concludes: “The having been sealed was delivered to the messenger, who was honoured with rich presents. Along with this letter was sent the Guru’s emissary Bhai Daya Singh. The Emperor pleased with the contents of letter and with appearances and dress of the Bhai who had accompanied it. He bestowed dresses of honour and valuable presents for the Guru”.²⁸

On the other hand, Cunningham the famous English historian on Punjab writes : “While thus living in retirement, messengers arrived to Summon him to the Emperor’s presence; but Gobind Singh replied to Aurangzeb in a series

27. Sayad Mohammad Latif, *History of Punjab*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 267.

28. *Ibid.*

of Parables, admonitory of kings. Pastly in a letter which accompanied them he remonstrates rather than humble himself. He denounces the wrath of God upon the Monarch, rather than deprecate the imperial anger against himself the Khalsa will avenge him. He refers to Guru Nanak's religious reform and briefly alludes to the deaths of Guru Arjun and Guru Tegh Bahadur. He was, as one without earthly link, patiently awaiting deaths, and fearing none but the sole emperor, the king of kings. Nor, said he, are the prayers of the poor ineffectual; and on the day of reckoning it would be seen how the emperor would justify his manifold cruelties and oppressions".²⁹

To conclude, this historic document from Guru Gobind Singh's pen provides us useful information about Guru's relations with Emperor Aurangzeb. It also gives us interesting hints about the political situation of the time as well as provides us a clear insights into the unbending spirit of the Guru in the face of the most horrid circumstances. *Zafarnama* is characteristic of sublimity of the Guru. It reflects the Guru's faith in righteousness and high moral purpose. It condemns what is unjust and tyrannical. It extols what is true and morally right, it is considered as a forthright essay in diplomacy known to history as it emphatically reiterates the sovereignty of morality in the affairs of the state as much as in the conduct of individual human behaviour. It regards means as important as the end. Absolute truthfulness is as much the duty of the sovereign as of any one of the ordinary citizens.

29. I.K. Gujral, *Zafarnama Epistle of Victory in Persian*, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 26-27.

GIANI GIAN SINGH'S (1822-1921) INTERPRETATION OF EARLY NAMDHARI TRADITION (Late 19th Century Perspective)

*Sulakhan Singh**

1.1 The Namdharis constitute a modern sect of the Sikhs. They do not have a very long past, just spanning over a period of hundred and fifty years. They trace their foundation to Baba Balak Singh who died in 1862 A.D. The subsequent Namdhari tradition developed and continued under the leadership of his disciple-successor Baba Ram Singh and his successors, Baba Hari Singh (alias Budh Singh) and Baba Partap Singh. Since 1959, Satguru Jagjit Singh is continuing the Namdhari mission at its headquarters at Bhaini Sahib in Ludhiana district of Punjab. The other famous centres of the Namdharis are also functioning at Jeevan Nagar near Sirsa in Haryana and at the Namdhari Darbar at New Delhi as well as at some other places of recognition. In this way, in a period of less than two centuries, the Namdharis have developed their own identity not only in respect to their belief system but also in terms of their response to the given socio-religious and political milieu.

2.1 Some scattered information on the early Namdhari history, no doubt, is available in the official records but hardly there is any contemporary account of the self-image of the Kukas by a Kuka scholar of nineteenth century. Hence, Giani Gian Singh's account of the early Namdharis or the Kukas of late nineteenth century in his *Sri Gur Panth Parkash* (1889 A.D.) deserves our special attention.¹ It is worth adding here that some Namdhari and Non-Namdhari scholars such as Bhai Kala Singh,² Inder Singh Chakarvarty,³ Nidhan Singh Alam,⁴ Balwant Singh⁵ and Swarn Singh Snehi⁶ have shown keen interest

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1. A brief account of the Namdhari Sikhs (as narrated by Giani Gian Singh) was published both in English and Punjabi by the Manager of *Sat jug*, Jivan Nagar, Sirsa, 1988.
2. Bhai Kala Singh, *Singhan Namdhariyan Da Shahid Bilas*, Gurmat Press, Amritsar, 1913.
3. Inder Singh Chakarvarty, *Namdhari Itihas* (part I), Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, 1934.
4. Sant Nidhan Singh, *Satguru Bilas*, Montgomery, 1939.
5. Balwant Singh, *Sri Satguru Ram Singh ji*, Bhaini Sahib, 1943.
6. He has contributed several articles on the history of the Namdhari movement and its historiography which have been mostly published in the *Proceedings of Punjab History Conference* every year by Punjabi University, Patiala.

in the history of the Kukas. Among the modern historians of the Sikhs and the Punjab, who took keen interest in exploring and explaining the Namdhari history, the names of Ganda Singh,⁷ Fauja Singh⁸ and W.H. McLeod⁹ are found worth mentioning here. Significantly, it may be noted that much of this writing was done immediately before and after India got independence. Thus, by now, fairly a good number of general and scholarly works are available on the Namdharis.¹⁰

3.1 For the purpose of better understanding of Giani Gian Singh's perceptions of early Namdhari history, it is pertinent to know something about his credentials as a scholar of Sikh history and Sikh sects. He has written nearly two dozen works on history of the Sikhs.¹¹ His *Sri Gur Panth Parkash* is available in different versions published by different agencies. As the text of these versions varies considerably, the present paper has been based on the text of a litho copy of the *Panth Parkash* prepared by Kaka Singh of Amritsar in 1889 A.D. It consists of 960 folios.¹²

3.2 In his *Panth Parkash*, Giani Gian Singh makes a clear reference to his religious affiliation with the Nirmala Sikh tradition. He refers to Pandit Tara Singh Narotam as his literary mentor and Mahant Veer Singh of Dera Baba Gandha Singh at Barnala as his religious preceptor. On the whole, he lived for the period of nearly a century witnessing a political change and the period of Sikh resurgence. His writings on the Sikh past and the history of the Sikh sects need to be understood in this context.

4.1 By the time Giani Gian Singh completed his *Panth Parkash*, the Namdhari or the Kuka tradition had been evolving from the last three decades having its genesis in the mid nineteenth century. His treatment of the Kukas is important because he thought of them as "an offshoot of the Khalsa Panth". They were better known as the Namdharis due to their staunch belief in the

7. Ganda Singh, *Kukian di Vithiya*, Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1944.

8. Fauja Singh Bajwa, *Kuka Movement*, Motilal Banarsi Dass, Delhi, 1965.

9. W. H. McLeod, "The Kukas a millanarian sect of the Punjab", *The Panjab Past and Present* (ed. Ganda Singh), Vol. XIII, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1979.

10. For a more recent work on the Namdharis, see : Kuldip Singh, *The Namdhari Movement: Continuity and Change (1857-1959)*, Ph.D. Thesis, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

11. For comprehensive analysis of Giani Gian Singh's writings, see : Sukhdial Singh, *Historical Analysis of Giani Gian Singh's Writings*, UICS(P) Ltd., Jalandhar, 1996.

12. Giani Gian Singh, *Sri Gur Panth Parkash*, (M.S. 1889 A.D. : Litho second edition), folios 959-60 (note by Giani Gian Singh). Its first edition was published from Delhi in 1880.

Naam Simran or the practice of recitation of the name of Almighty. He makes it clear that his contemporaries preferred to call them Kukas because they emitted loud shrieks while reciting the name of God.¹³

5.1 In regard to the genesis of the Namdharis, Giani Gian Singh writes that Balak Singh Arora, from whom they traced their descent, was born in 1799 A.D at village Chhoie on the banks of river Attock in Pothohar region.¹⁴ Balak Singh was very popular in his area for holding the *Satsangs* (congregations). It was in the year 1828 A.D. that he moved to the village Hazro alongwith his brother and settled over there to earn his living by the profession of shopkeeping. Giani Gian Singh writes that due to his extreme devotion to God, Balak Singh became very famous in that region too.¹⁵

6.1 Significantly, the Namdharis had a staunch belief in (Baba) Ram Singh as an incarnation of the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh. Ram Singh was born in 1815 A.D in the house of Jassa Singh carpenter of village Bhaini in Ludhiana district. He had the opportunity to serve in the army of Lahore Darbar. In 1841 A.D. he went to Hazro in connection with his service, where he met Balak Singh, who blessed him and directed to spread the mission of Guru Gobind Singh.¹⁶

6.2 Ram Singh was very much devoted to the mission of Guru Gobind Singh. He persuaded his contemporaries to keep uncut hair and abstain from using intoxicants of any type. Giani Gian Singh emphatically states that Ram Singh gained considerable prominence among the Khalsa Sikhs who felt obliged to him as the Khalsa Panth had begun to flourish tremendously. Not only this, under the influence of Baba Ram Singh's personality, many addicts gave up the use of intoxicants as well as the habits of meat eating and stealing. Thus, in this way, many gathered around him to experience the charm of his sermons. Giani Gian Singh writes that Ram Singh earned his living by selling iron and cloth and the offerings he received from his followers were used for the upkeep of the *Langar* or the community kitchen.¹⁷

6.3 As regards their belief system, the followers of Ram Singh recited the name of God with the help of some musical instruments. Also, they performed *Havan* and recited the *Bani* of Sikh Gurus at the same time. They bathed their hair at night and recited the name of God. Both men and women

13. *Ibid.*, p. 875.

14. *Loc. cit.*

15. *Sri Gur Panth Parkash* (MS 1889), folio 876.

16. *Loc. cit.*

17. *Sri Gur Panth Parkash* (MS 1889), folio 877.

wore white clean clothes, *Kachh* (shorts), *Kara* (iron bangle), *Kard* (knife) and used woolen rosary for *Naam Simran*.¹⁸

7.1 Generally, the Namdhari followers of Ram Singh did not marry outside the sphere of their own fraternity. Significantly indeed, by not extending charity to the Brahmans, they denied them the right to perform rites and ceremonies relating to marriage, birth, and death. They usually performed their marriage ceremonies in the presence of *Guru Granth Sahib*. In this way, they took the stance of staunch critics of the Hindu priestly elements who had a conflict with the Sikh reformists of their shrines. In this context, Giani Gian Singh has made some significant references to Ram Singh's visits to the Sikh Gurdwaras at Dam Dama Sahib, Muktsar, Anandpur Sahib and at Amritsar, where the *Pujaris* (priests) had shown their wrath to the Namdhari Sikhs in the same manner as they did in the case of the Nirmala Sikhs.¹⁹ In this way, Giani Gian Singh has perhaps tried to justify the mission of Guru Gobind Singh and the stance of the Kuka Sikhs towards the priests or the *Pujaris* of the historical Sikh shrines.

8.1 Significantly, Giani Gian Singh has all praise for the Kuka martyrs who lost their lives during the period from 1863 to 1873. They had protested against the cow slaughtering in the butcher houses at Amritsar. He writes that the Kukas happily offered themselves for sacrificing their lives at Malerkotla. The army of the Patiala State is said to have played truant in getting the Kukas arrested by the British. Giani Gian Singh writes that when the Kukas were being blown with the cannons, they very calmly kept reciting the name of God. The Chiefs of the Phulkian states and the British officials were perplexed to see the courage shown by the Kuka martyrs. During this period, Ram Singh was arrested and sent to Rangoon (Burma).²⁰ Many of the Kukas were also sent to some other places in order to dismember or discourage the 'Panth' of the Namdharis. However, the line of succession of the Namdharis, continued from Ram Singh to Baba Hari Singh (alias Budh Singh).²¹

9.1 On the whole, Giani Gian Singh claims his account of the Namdharis as true one. Undoubtedly, his understanding or interpretation of the Namdhari tradition of the late nineteenth century has a value of its own in the sense of being an earliest available account of the Namdhari past. However, his observations and perceptions, need to be corroborated in the light of various

18. *Ibid.*, folio 878.

19. *Ibid.*, folio 879.

20. *Ibid.*, folio 880.

21. *Loc. cit.*

contemporary official records of the same period available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi. For enhancing our comprehensive understanding of the Namdharis, Giani Gian Singh's interpretation of the Namdhari tradition may also be compared with the later perspectives on their history written by both the Namdhari and Non-Namdhari scholars.

HISTORICAL TESTIMONY.... AN EVALUATION OF SOME SOURCE MATERIAL ON EARLY MEDIEVAL PUNJAB

Kavita*

There is, of course, paucity of contemporary and near contemporary sources on the medieval period of the history of Punjab which is virtually by and large the history of the Sikhs. The present paper reveals the nature of the sources available and assesses their merits and demerits. A critical appreciation will decidedly prove useful in reconstructing the history of the period under reference.

Contemporary Muslim writers and historians took a little notice of the Sikh Movement initiated by the Sikh Gurus. As a matter of fact, it was only in the later stage that the Mughal authorities took a keen and serious view of the uptrend, spread and organisation of Sikh institutions and that too in a mis-conceived way. The statement of Jahangir, the Mughal Emperor about Guru Arjan duly recorded in *Tuzak-i-Jahangiri*, his autobiography is worthy of thoughtful note here :

Several simple minded Hindus, not only so, but many a stupid Muslims too, had been tempted by his manners and teachings. He was talked about as a religious and temporal guide. He was called Guru and from all sides throngs of foolish people would approach him and express great devotion to him. This busy traffic had been continuing for three or four generations. For years together the idea had been constantly coming to my mind that either I should stop this false course or he should be forced to embrace Islam.¹

Above statement of Emperor Jahangir gives an explicit evidence of his fanatical and hostile way of thinking about the Sikh movement and the execution of Guru Arjan Dev was highly shocking and shot in the arm to the entire community of the Sikhs. Of course, there was a strong reaction to it.

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1. Emperor Nur-ud-Din Muhammad Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow, nd, p. 272.

Muslim contemporary and near contemporary writers almost took a light view of the rise and growth of the Sikh Movement to the extent that only a casual and fragmentary account of the achievements of the Sikh Gurus is available in the significant contemporary writings of the Muslim authors.² Only two examples will be sufficient here to illustrate the point.

A contemporary Parsi Mobid of Guru Hargobind, gives a casual account of the activities of the Sikh Gurus in his *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* under the sub-title 'Nanak Panthis'. Nevertheless, the information whatever scanty it is, it goes without saying that it is indispensable. Of course, there is no denial to it that he pays no serious attention to the evaluation of Sikhism, the conflict with the Mughal Government and the battles fought by the Guru and his disciples with the Mughal Faujdars etc. The foundation of the *Akal Takht*, "The Throne of the Immortal" and Martial concerns of the Guru and his Sikhs have absolutely been neglected by the author of the *Dabistan*.

Moreover, the author of *Dabistan* has not been able to comprehend the legacy of the *Akal Takht*. After his battles, Guru Hargobind did not think it wise to stay either at Amritsar or Kartarpur or at Phagwara for reasons of safety. All these places were situated along the Grand Trunk Road leading from Delhi to Lahore. He retired into the secluded hills lying to the north of the Punjab and settled down at Kiratpur. After the Guru's migration to Kiratpur during the 1630's, no Guru of the Sikhs stayed permanently at Amritsar. Consequently, the institution of *Akal Takht* remained inactive. But it goes without saying that this institution of the Sikhs assumed the form and shape of a well-developed effectuation. Anyhow, its revival under the changed circumstances was certain, obligatory and unavoidable.

However, the profile of certain issues given by the author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* is one of the most informative works on the history of a number of religions, written in the year 1644. Its section on 'Nanak

2. Mobid writes in his *Dabistan* :

When Nanak relinquished his mortal frame, he reappeared into the body of Guru Angad. Guru Angad is the incarnation of Guru Nanak. Afterwards on his demise his body entered into the body of Guru Amardas. In the same way he chose his abode in Guru Ram Das who likewise, entered into Guru Arjan's body. Everyone of them was known as *Mahal*. They said that anyone who has no reliance in Guru Arjan as the manifestation of Baba Nanak himself, he becomes a non-believer.

'*Dabistan-i-Mazahib*' in *Makhiz-i-Tawarikh-i-Sikhan* (ed. Ganda Singh), Sikh History Society, Amritsar, 1949, pp. 34-35.

Panthis' is the first from the pen of a Muslim, written in Persian script providing a brief account of the Sikh Gurus and their following upto the mid-seventeenth century. The author was a contemporary of Guru Hargobind and Guru Har Rai, the sixth and seventh Gurus of the Sikhs respectively and had personal acquaintance with them.

T.W. Beals argues that having a religious bent of mind, the author of *Dabistan* probes in an objective manner into five main religions of his times. The portion of the work 'Nanak Panthis' furnishes sketchy account but accommodates us with first hand information, which is almost not traceable in any other writing on the infant Sikh faith.

Muhammad Hasham Khafi Khan, the writer of *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* does not make any issue of the battles of Guru Gobind Singh with the hilly rulers and the Mughal authorities though the fact remains that the conflict with the Mughal Faujdars was a more serious matter.

However, it was left to the devotees of the Sikh Gurus to put to writing whatever came to their notice supplying the indispensable source material describing the myths and miracles, the motivations and influences of the times. *Sakhis*,³ *Gurbilases*⁴ and *Parkashs*⁵ are obviously to the point instances of such writings. These writings can prove helpful in producing a dynamic record of the activities of the Sikh Gurus if used with the original and primary sources like the *Bachittar Natak*,⁶ *Sri Gur Sobha*⁷ etc. in an historical perspective with care and caution.

Bhai Gurdas, a contemporary of Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Hargobind wrote *Vars* in Gurmukhi script, known as key to the *Adi Granth* which

3. *Sakhis* present the life and times of the Sikh Gurus in the devotional spirit. For instance, *Sau Sakhi* relates some anecdotes pertaining to the life of Guru Gobind Singh. It was dictated by one Baba Ram Koerji, also called Gurbakhsh Singh, as the tradition goes, and was written by Bhai Sahib Singh. It contains certain anachronistic remarks.
4. Prominent *Gurbilases* include *Gurbilas Patshahi 10* written by Bhai Koer Singh. The other one is that of Sukha Singh. Both give an interesting and useful account of Guru Gobind Singh and his times and both require historical scrutiny.
5. *Prachin Panth Parkash* by Rattan Singh Bhangu is a mine of information on the Sikh-Afghan and Sikh-Mughal conflict. Whereas *Mehma Prakash (Kavita)* by Sarup Das Bhalla throws prominent light on the Sikh Gurus.
6. *Bachittar Natak*, a part of *Dasam Granth* is an auto-biography of Guru Gobind Singh and touches significant aspects of his life.
7. *Sri Gur Sobha* (ed. Ganda Singh, Patiala, 1967), written by Kavi Sainapat deemed to be one of the fifty-two poets of the Court of Guru Gobind Singh is an informative work.

throw useful but scanty light on the life and times of Guru Hargobind, who founded the *Akal Takht* and made it a centre of his martial activities. Even fragmentary statements of Bhai Gurdas given in his *Vars* provide useful information on the position and martial concerns of Guru Hargobind :

*'Panj piale panj pir chhatam pir betha gur bhari Arjun kaia palt ke murat Hargobind savari. Dal bhanjan Gur surma vadh jodha bau parupkari.'*⁸

The use of the word 'vanquisher' of the battles by Bhai Gurdas is in itself significant. This indicates the Guru's achievements in organising a sort of army at the *Akal Takht* and the battles fought by him against the hill chiefs and Mughal faujdars to defend the claims of self conscience and to uphold the *dharma* enunciated by Guru Nanak.

Bhai Gurdas also gives useful hints about other Sikh Gurus and their times. He supplies a useful list of names of the Sikhs of the times of the Sikh Gurus in his work. A booklet entitled *Sikhan-di-Bhagat Mala* or *Gur Ratnavali* was later on produced on the basis of Bhai Gurdas's *Vars*. Bhai Gurdas also wrote stories pertaining to the holy and the enterprising Sikhs. He has even put to writing though briefly certain mythological events from the *Puranas*. The hints given in the *Vars* are evidently a rich source of information for investigating the martial interest of Guru Hargobind.

Sri Gur Sobha authored by Kavi Sainapat, one of the fifty-two Court poets of Guru Gobind Singh deals with different achievements of the Guru which include the creation of the *Khalsa*, the martial concerns of the Guru namely his battles with the Mughal Faujdars and the hill chiefs, the formation and organisation of the Guru's army etc.

Sainapat's work has a contribution to Sikh history in many ways. A casual instance will suffice here. Sainapat's work is the earliest source traced so far in Gurmukhi literature, which gives the connotation of the word '*misl*' as a group. It agrees with Persian literature throughout that calls it *groh-e-Sikhan*. Rattan Singh Bhangu and some other contemporary writers presenting their accounts on Sikh-Mughal and Sikh-Afghan struggle use the word '*misl*' in the same sense.

Sainapat's writing is forceful and impressive. By studying his description of the battles of the Guru against the hill chiefs and the Mughals, one feels as if one is a participant in these conflicts. However, though Sainapat is a contemporary yet there are a number of events

8. Bhai Gurdas, *Varan*, Var 1, Pauri 48.

described by him which cannot be literally viewed to be witnessed by him with his own eyes and this is a limitation of a contemporary. Sainapat himself writes in this regard :

Kachhu Suni Kachhu ukat kar barnat hon ab soe

*Karanhar Karta dhani jo kachhu kare su hoe*⁹

Hence, we can safely say that a survey of the above works is decidedly a must for writing an authentic account of the times.

9. Sainapat, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

PEASANTRY UNDER AKBAR

*Sukhwinder Kaur**

The word peasantry is denoted by the Arabic word *Raiyat* now naturalized in English as *Ryot*. The main feature of medieval Punjab's economy was the production chiefly for local consumption. The peasant or the cultivator was the backbone of this economy. The duty of the peasants is firstly to raise production and secondly to pay a share of his product to the king's protection and he can enjoy the balance of his produced subject, of course, to any rule for its expenditure contained in the law. The peasant tilled the soil, worked hard throughout the year, yet lived in the utter poverty and hardship as is evident from a number of couplets in Guru Nanak *bani*.

Guru Nanak gives a very high place to the peasants. As Guru Nanak says: *The true and wise farmer knows, that one sows the seed only after one has tilled the kind and furrowed it.*¹

To convey the idea of spiritual upliftment, Guru Nanak, by using the common vocabulary familiar to village folks, indirectly portrays the system of cultivation as under:

*Let thy mind be the Farmer and deeds the Farming and let thy
Body be the farm, water it, yea, with effort.*

*Let the lord's Name be the seed, and contentment the furrowing, and let
the fence be of Humility.*

*If thou dost deeds of love, thy seeds will sprout and fortunate will then
be thy Home.*²

Such examples in Guru Nanak's *bani* are not wanting. Referring to the human body as a farm, the actions of a human being as seeds and the *Name* of God as water, Guru Nanak indirectly points out the three basic needs of a

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1. *Guru Granth Sahib*, Sri Rag, Mahala 1, p. 19.

ਆਪਿ ਸੁਜਾਣੁ ਨ ਭੁਲਈ ਸਚਾ ਵਡ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੁ॥
ਪਹਿਲਾ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਾਹਿ ਕੈ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੇ ਦਾਣੁ॥

2. *Ibid.*, Rag Sorath, M.1, p. 595.

ਮਨੁ ਹਾਲੀ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੀ ਕਰਣੀ ਸਰਮੁ ਪਾਣੀ ਤਨੁ ਖੇਤੁ॥
ਨਾਮੁ ਬੀਜੁ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੁਹਾਗਾ ਰਖੁ ਗਰੀਬੀ ਵੇਸੁ॥
ਭਾਉ ਕਰਮ ਕਰਿ ਜੰਮਸੀ ਸੇ ਘਰ ਭਾਗਨ ਦੇਖੁ॥

farmer to have good harvest.³ Similar kind of views are expressed in the following couplet.

*If good actions be thy farm, and thy seed be the word, watered by the way of Truth, the growth will then be of faith.*⁴

The economic position of the peasantry was not worst. Though the peasants were living below the standard of living, yet their position was considerably better than their predecessor, perhaps due to the better administration under Akbar. As far as ownership of land was concerned, some writers misled by the evidence of foreign travelers hold that the king or the state was the perpetrator of the land. The theory of state ownership of land grew up during the anarchy of the 18th century and was sponsored by the British rulers for their own interests and policies. But it is now generally recognized that the cultivator was the owner of the land. Contemporary literature like *Ain-i-Akbari* also confirms it,⁵ but the peasant was not free to alienate it or use it arbitrarily, in one sense the land belonged to the peasant, in other words peasant belonged to the land, writes Irfan Habib, he could sell, transfer and mortgage his land.⁶

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the European travelers who visited this country has commonly described the king as the owner of all land.⁷ The cultivators were the masters of the land in the Mughal Punjab. The word owner (proprietor) was also called *Malik-i-Zamin* (owner of the land).⁸ They could sell, mortgage or give away their land in gift. The land was passed from father to son like all other properties. The state had an interest in landed

3. *Ibid.*, Sri Rag, M.1, p. 23.

ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਬੀਜੁ ਕਰਮਾ ਕਰੋ
ਸਲਿਲ ਆ ਪਾਉ ਸਾਰਿੰਗਪਾਣੀ॥
ਮਨੁ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੁ ਹਰਿ ਰਿਦੈ ਜੰਮਾਇਲੈ
ਇਉ ਪਾਵਸਿ ਪਦੁ ਨਿਰਬਾਦੀ॥॥

4. *Ibid.*, Sri Rag, M. 1, p. 24.

ਅਮਲੁ ਕਰਿ ਧਰਮੀਪ ਬੀਜੁ ਸਬਦੋ ਕਰਿ
ਸਚ ਕੀ ਆਬ ਨਿਤ ਦੇਹਿ ਪਾਣੀ॥
ਹੋਇ ਕਿਰਸਾਣੁ ਈਮਾਨ ਜੰਮਾਇ ਲੈ
ਭਿਸਤੁ ਦੋਜਕੁ ਮੂੜੇ ਏਵ ਜਾਣੀ॥॥

5. Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, (Trs. H.S. Jarrett), Calcutta, 1978, pp. 325-46.

6. Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India: 1556-1707*, New Delhi, 1999, p. 25.

7. Ray Tapan Chaudhri and Irfan Habib (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of India (1200-1750)*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1984, p. 235.

8. Satish Chandra, *Medieval India (From Sultanat to the Mughals 1206-1526)*, New Delhi, 2002, p. 147.

estates of a cultivator who ran away after defaulting in the payment of the revenue.⁹

About the proprietorship of the land some writers have asserted the view that all the land was always considered legally to be king's property.¹⁰

The peasant proprietors were holding the *Malkiyat* rights; the peasant as *malik*, a word which originally denoted a king, but in process of time it had come to mean an owner.¹¹

The peasant should strive to bring waste lands into cultivation and take heed to what on cultivation does not prove waste. He should stimulate the increase of valuable produce and remit somewhat of the assessment with a view to its augmentation and if the peasant cultivates less and to make any excuse, let him not accept it. Should there be no waste land in a village and a peasant be capable of adding to his cultivation, he should allow him land in some other village.¹²

The peasant as *Raiyat* had no right to alienate his land freely. Cultivation as a right was vested hereditarily in the peasant, but it was also an obligation from which no peasant was exempted. He was thus not a free agent. If the land belonged to him, he also belonged to the land and hence was not very different in his rights.¹³

The *malik* enjoyed the following interests and rights of property in land. He retained a claim in the produce even when he did not cultivate the land or did not engage for land revenue. On the land entered against his name as *malik*, under these conditions between the *malik's* original share of the produce and the amount paid to the government as kind of revenue, his right to bring back his land under his cultivation or management remained even though he did not engage for the land revenue for sometime. He enjoyed the right to sell his land and mortgage his land. The *malikana* right was hereditary.¹⁴

If such a peasant proprietor left the land it would be temporarily given to someone else. But the proprietor would still be entitled to receive the

9. B.S. Nijjar, *Panjab Under the Great Mughals, 1526-1707*, Bombay, 1968, p. 119.

10. P.N. Chopra, (ed.), *The Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II (History and Culture), New Delhi, 1973, p. 381.

11. W.H. Moreland, *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, p. 139.

12. Abul Fazl, Vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 46.

13. Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Themes in Indian History (The Mughals' State 1526-1750)*, Delhi 1998, p. 262.

14. Noman Ahmad, Siddiqi, *Land Revenue Administration under the Mughals (1700-1750)*, New Delhi, 1960, pp. 148-149.

Malikana and to get back the land whenever he was in a position to take it back.¹⁵

In the Mughal administrative manuals terms like *Kashawarz*, *Dahkan*, *Riayah* and *Muzariyah* are found for the tillers of the soil though collectively they are often mentioned as *Riayah*. But on closer examination it will be found that *Riayah* was specific class of cultivators who, broadly speaking, could be divided into three categories *Khudkashta*, *Pahikashta* and *Muqqarrari*.

Khudkashta : Such a cultivator was a peasant proprietor having his field and residential house in the same village. The *Khudkashta* carried the cultivation of his land personally with assistance of his family members and did not lease out his land to other cultivators as tenants. The state recognized his hereditary right on the land and to sell, transfer or mortgage his land. The statement of Abul Fazl that the *Amalguzar* was instructed to strive to bring waste land into cultivation and to take heed that what was in cultivation did not fall waste, indicates that the declared policy of the *Mughal Emperor* was to bring more and more land under cultivation. Besides, the revenue demand was on the produce and not on land and, therefore, measures were taken to see that the *Khudkashta* did not leave any position of his arable land to follow. But if for some justifiable cause some part of his land remained uncultivated it was left out of assessment and no revenue demanded on that portion; instruction to the *Amalguzar* given in the *Ain-i-Akbari* states, 'if a husbandman cultivates less quantity of land than he engaged for, but produce a good excuse, let it be accepted.'¹⁶

Pahikashta : the cultivator whose residence and agricultural fields were located in different villages was called *pahikashta*. This class of cultivators seems to have come into existence as a result of Akbar's measure to bring new land under cultivation; one of the instructions to *Amalguzar* was should there be no waste land in a village and the husbandman be capable of adding to the cultivation, he should allow him land in a village and the husbandman be capable of adding to his cultivation, he should allow him the kind in some other villages.¹⁷ It is in this process that some cultivators got land in villages other than their residence. The same person was a *Khudkashta* for his land in another village. Since he developed the land from waste, he became its hereditary proprietor in the same sense as *Khudkashta* and enjoyed the same rights of mortgage, transfer and sale.

15. S. Nurul Hassan, *Thoughts on Agrarian Relations in Mughal India*, Delhi, 1973, p. 24.

16. Abul Fazl, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 46.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Muqqarrari Riayah was one whose possessions were larger than what he could cultivate from the personal resources. But he was held responsible for the payment of revenue for his entire land which was subject to assessment irrespective of whether it was or it was not under cultivation like the other two; he also enjoyed full rights of transfer, mortgage, sale and hereditary right over his land. Since the *Muqqarrari Riayah* was responsible for the payment of revenue even for the portions, which remained uncultivated, he enjoyed the right of setting cultivators as tenants on his surplus land or could get it cultivated through temporary lease to other cultivators. The land of the *Muqqarrari Riayah* had three types of cultivators i.e., the *Riayah* himself, tenant cultivator and lease holder cultivator. The cultivators who were settled as tenants were called *Muzariah*, who also acquired hereditary titles to the land, but paid the revenue for his holding to the *Muqqarrari Riayah* and not to the government officers. In such a case, however the ownership was put up between the *Muqqarrari Riayah* and the *Muzariah*, the farmer becoming *Zamindars* for the latter. The revenue paid by the *Muzariah* to the *Muqqarrari Riayah* was a certain share of the product which was stipulated in the unalterable terms of the *patta* (title deed).¹⁸

The rights of the *Muzariah* and the relationship with the *Muqqarrari Riayah* were the result of land-man ratio. Abundance of waste land and smaller number of men available for cultivation placed the *Muzariah Riayah* at an advantage and the *Muqqarrari Riayah* could never think in terms of ousting him from the land. *Muzariah* could surrender his rights of the land after the expiry of the *patta* and could change his holding if he liked. Since the state too was interested in increasing cultivation, it readily recognized the right of *Muzariah* on the land he cultivated. The *Muqqarrari Riayah* and the *Muzariah* both enjoyed more or less equal rights and privileges and so long as the *Riayah* paid the land revenue to the state and *Muzariah* gave sent to the *Riayah* their respective positions were unchallengeable. In case of trouble the administrative machinery helped the *Riayah* in realisation of the sent, but it did not dispossess the *Muzariah* from his land. The *Muzariah* retained for himself, a share of the product of the land cultivated by him (as stipulated in the *patta*) and handed over the rest to the *Muqqarrari Riayah*. Out of the amount thus received the *Muqqarrari Riayah* met the share demand and other expenses for maintenance of the land such as construction of wells etc. and the balance left was considered as his profit as earning from his property. This balance or profit

18. U.N. Day, *The Mughal Government : AD 1556-1707*, New Delhi, 1994., pp. 106-107.

was also called *Malikana*.¹⁹

The *Muqqarrari Riayah* could also give his land on purely temporary lease on certain conditions which were stipulated in the agreement deed. The lessee was called *Mustajir*.²⁰ The word *Ijara* in the context of the present document would mean simply the lease for five and a half years. It is not the less interesting to note that towards the close of Aurangzeb's reign *Aimma* was treated as a hereditary property that could be leased out. If the leaseholder too was exempted from any revenue demands the total amount of eighty eight rupees for eight *ghumaons* of land irrigated by a well appears to be rather small.²¹ *Ijara* and *Mustajir* however, had a different connotation and were generally connected with contract of collection. But those terms were also applied in cases of temporary lease and leaseholds. The established rights of the *Riayah Khudkashta*, *Pahikashta* and *Muqqarrari Riayah* and the *Tenant Muzariah* were fully safeguarded and guaranteed both by convention and by the state law. The revenue officers like *Amil* and *Karoris* were instructed to record each class of cultivators and not only to safeguard their rights, but also to augment agricultural produce and to bring more and more waste land under cultivation. The records clearly indicate that the hereditary proprietorship right of the *Riayah* and the hereditary right of the tenant was preserved and their property was returned to them whenever they returned to their land or recovered their capacity to cultivate it.

The Mughal emperors took special care for bringing more and more land under cultivation. They granted *Taccavi* loans to the peasants whenever the latter required money to improve their lands. Remissions were in land revenue in case of failure of crops or famine. Once when Guru Arjan represented to Akbar land revenue was remitted of a certain part of Punjab for one year. Later, during the reign of Shah Jahan, when a severe famine occurred in Punjab, Kitchens were set up to distribute free food to those affected. Besides, a special tax named *Dashsiri tax* was collected from the peasants the amount of which was used for famine relief.

The welfare of the peasants was regarded as the basis of the prosperity of the state, which adopted a benevolent attitude towards peasants. The government aimed at protecting the peasants from oppression, official and local. The collection officers were urged to be friends and well wishers of the

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108.

20. *Mustajir* has been explained elsewhere under the collection agencies.

21. B.N. Goswamy, J.S. Grewal, *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, Simla, 1969, p. 82.

peasants and not their superiors. The farmer was to allow choice of assessment to the latter. The state's selection with the peasant being direct, the system was called *Ryotwari*. Each peasant had an agreement with the state. The latter gave him the *patta* (title deed) stating the cultivated area, the crops and their quality. The peasant in turn, gave the state the *qabuliyat* accepting the assessment. He paid land revenue usually in cash but could, if aggrieved, pay in kind also. Any officer, collecting more than the legitimate due was punished and had to refund excess. Extortions, illegal gratifications and unauthorized taxes were abolished.²² The peasants were encouraged to pay the revenue direct to the *pargana* treasury and were given receipts.

Abul Fazl²³ mentioned about the peasantry in *Akbarnama*, Vol. III, that it appeared that in the crown *parganas* the cultivated lands diminished year by year. If the cultivated land were measured once for all, the peasantry would cultivate more and more land in proportion to their ability and the arrangement of progressive payments should be made. They should give one another as securities and should execute documents. In the case of land which had lain fallow for four years, only half of the stipulated rent should be taken for the first year, three fourth in the second and in the third the peasants should be responsible for the full rent. For land which had been uncultivated for two years, one fourth of the rent should be deducted for the first year. In the case of uncultivated lands, they were to be allowed to keep back a small amount of grain so that their lands might become capable of yielding rent. If destitute cultivators were assisted documents should be taken from known men and recoveries made partly at the *autumn* harvest so that the country might soon be cultivated, the peasantry satisfied and the treasury replenished.

When the crops are standing let several measuring parties (*Tanab* measuring rope but here used for the survey party) be appointed in proportion to the amount of land and let the measurement be started in an intelligent manner and the kind and quality of the cultivation be noticed. The collector will choose a central spot for himself and carefully visit every part of the land and examine the condition.

The population of the Mughal Empire consisted of numerous tribes and people, who spoke whole variety of language had reached varying levels of social development and were divided by caste barriers and religions. The

22. Thomas Edward, *The Revenue Resources of the Mughal Empire in India*, Delhi, 1969, p. 435.

23. Abul Fazl, *The Akbarnama*, Vol. III (Trs. H. Beveridge), Delhi, 1973, pp. 561-563.

majority of the population lived in the small narrow world of their village community. The peasants paid rent to the state in the form of land revenue. It was in the government's interests that this tax-cum-rent should be paid regularly. But neither the state, nor the feudal lords, interfered in the peasants' affairs.

The state demand was $\frac{1}{3}$ of the production. This tax was viewed as "just", although at times the peasants were unable to pay it. Then troops were called in to help and collect the revenue.

Akbar's substitution of tax in kind by a tax to be paid in money in the central regions of his empire was a heavy burden on the peasants. The peasant in order to obtain money was now obliged on his own or with the help of the community headman to sell his product in the market and thus became exceedingly dependent on the merchants, and money lenders. Although Akbar lifted a good number of minor taxes, yet the feudal lords continued to collect them from the peasants and then use such money for their own heads.

To conclude during the rule of Akbar the condition of peasantry class was better. The Mughals had to see that no government officials harm or oppress the peasants as that would affect the state exchequer and would become difficult for it to run the administration smoothly. But Akbar promptly provided relief whenever, the peasants, were in distress. In 1590, he gave relief to the cultivators, when prices of grains fell on account of bumper crops. However, he did not hesitate to increase the revenue, when peasants were benefited due to increases in prices. Their life and property were well protected. Emperor Akbar took strong action against erring officials. Even Afghan traders were not spared when they exploited the weak. One can say that Akbar was a benevolent ruler and took prompt action against those who acted with cruelty towards peasants.

Presidential Address

(Modern Section)

FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON GENDER RELATIONS IN
COLONIAL PUNJAB : A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

*Dr. Sunita Pathania**

At the outset I want to express my gratitude to the organisers of the Punjab History Conference for giving me the opportunity to address the fellow historians and share my not too profound ideas with them. It is indeed an honour which I am afraid I do not deserve. In this paper, I intend to present a historiographical review of feminist perspective on gender relations in Punjab in mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with particular reference to the agenda of reforms undertaken by the middle class reformists among the Hindus and the Sikhs. A sizable number of scholarly works offering gender perspective on different aspects of social reforms or relating to specific understanding of various social reformers in Punjab on the question of women have enriched the historical understanding till date. However, for this address I have focused only on two works viz. Anshu Malhotra's *Gender, Caste and Religious Identities : Restructuring Class in Colonial Punjab* and Doris R. Jacobsh's *Relocating Gender in Sikh History : Transformation, Meaning and Identity*. The primary reason for this selection is that both these works present a brilliant comprehensive analysis of the women question in the social reformists' agenda in Punjab from a feminist perspective.

It is only in the nineteenth century that Indian women started attracting historians' attention as objects of history and getting acknowledged in the historical accounts. As socio-religious reforms emerged as a major issue of concern in India with women as its prime target, it is not surprising that position, status and role of women in India became an object of academic interest both for the colonialists as well as the Indian historians. Hence, the early nineteenth century accounts of women in India revolved around issues like *Sati*, infanticide, child marriage, widowhood, polygamy and polyandry and the education of women. The primacy given to only those selective aspects of women's life which formed the agenda of socio-religious reforms meant

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that the other issues connected intimately with women's life like household, family size, fertility, religious rituals, work, occupation, health, technology and environment were sidelined in historical accounts as events of no historical significance. The general pattern that these accounts followed was the glorious position of women in the ancient golden age, followed by decline in their status in the medieval times, and the improvement in their position once again as a result of the introduction of western ideas and values and their adaptation by the enlightened Indians. Primarily a product of colonial experience, these accounts followed the established tradition of European linear understanding of history. Thus, most of the writings of the missionaries, colonial administrators or social reformers were a narrative of women's slow but progressive march towards modernity following a period of stagnation. These accounts by essentializing women around biological differences, specificities of their nature and the subordinate role they were supposed to play in society, homogenized women in India into a single category ignoring the categories of caste, class and hierarchies of age among women. Nor was any attention paid to regional and cultural specificities that define women's life and their experiences. It is not to say that no single woman at this stage found mention as a subject in historical records. Occasionally some women were picked up for attention but they were those whose accomplishments were considered remarkable of recording from male point of view.¹ While colonial histories primarily focus on the civilizing mission of the British as rescuing women from their own oppressive society and culture,² the social reformists accounts treat women as the site on which 'tradition was debated and reformulated. In any case these histories tended to view women either as victims or heroines, thereby homogenizing them and denying any agency to them.³ In the hands of nationalist historians this victim/ heroine syndrome was transformed though

1. Geraldine Forbes, *The new Cambridge History of India: Women in Modern India* {New Delhi, 1996}, Introduction; Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Colonial India: Essays on Politics, medicine and Historiography* {Delhi, 2005} ; Aparna Basu, "Women's History in India: An Historiographical Survey" in Karen Offen and others eds., *Writing Women's History: International Perspective* {London, 1991}.
2. For colonialist understanding of women in India see James Mill, *History of British India*, 2 vols., {New York, 1968} ; W.Crooke ed., Herbert Hope Risley, *The People of India*, 2nd edn. {Delhi, 1969}; Reverend E. Storrow, *Our Indian Sisters* {London, nd.} and Mrs. Marcus W. Fuller, *The Wrongs of Indian Womanhood* {Edinburgh, 1902} provides missionary views on Indian women.
3. Lata Mani, "The Contentious Tradition: the Debate on Sati in Colonial India", Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid eds., *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History* {Delhi, 1989}, pp.117 -18.

not totally replaced by references to women's public roles by the historians. This became possible as Gandhi by bringing women into the national movement provided them with public space even though in the shape of extension of their familial roles. Women's role and contribution to the national movement came to be acknowledged by the nationalist historians.⁴ However, this did not mean the foregrounding of women's history and her agency as women's role was only viewed as supportive of men's actions. The Marxist historiography though remarkable in its attention to people's history, remained primarily focused on class as analytical tool and women were treated as integral to the class and not a separate category by the Marxist historians for a long time. The common absence in all these accounts is the women's voice. What did they want, what were their expectations from reform, whether they wished to be reformed or not, what were their own aspirations are some aspects that remained neglected.⁵

Since mainstream historiography in India had either ignored or devalued women in history, it became necessary to move out of the restricting orbit of mainstream history to foregrounding and reclaiming the realities of women's lives. Hence, new criteria for historical analyses were necessary. The new challenges to the existing historical understanding began to make appearance in India in the eighties in the form of subaltern and feminist historiography. Subaltern approach to history while making decisive contribution in articulating the experiences of all non elite suppressed peoples too suffers from a serious analytical weakness. It often tends to constitute subalterns as autonomous subjects having complete control over their thoughts and actions. This

4. A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization* { Delhi, 1959 } ; Neera Desai, *Women in Modern India* { Bombay, 1957 } ; Tara Ali Beg, *India's Women Power*, { New Delhi, 1976 } ; Man Mohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement 1857-1947* { Delhi, 1968 } ; For Feminist reading of the Indian national movement see, Joanna Liddle and Rama Joshi, *Daughters of Independence : Gender, Caste and Class in India* { New Jersey, 1989 } ; Saruchi Thapar, "Women as Activists, Women as Symbols : A Study of Indian National Movement" , *Feminist Review*, vol. 44, Summer 1993 ; Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the third World*, { London, 1986 } ; Sujata Patel, "Construction and Reconstruction of Women In Gandhi", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 23, no. 8, 20 Feb., 1988, pp.378-89 ; Madhu Kishwar "Women and Gandhi", *Economic and Political Weekly*", Vol.20, Oct.5 and 12, 1985 and Geraldine Forbes, "The Politics of Respectability : Indian Women and the Indian National Congress" in D.A. Low ed., *The Indian National Congress* { Delhi, 1988 } to name a few.
5. Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar eds., *Women and Social Reforms in Modern India*, vol.1 { Delhi, 2007 }, p.9.

perspective can not be fully sustained by the actuality of women's history and realities of their experience in everyday life.⁶ Furthermore, women's subaltern status did not constitute the main forte of subaltern studies in India for a long time. The feminist historiography has tried to overcome this lacuna by its emphasis on gender as an analytical tool in understanding the realities of women's lives, and thereby their histories. Here we would like to stress that feminism with its long history is by no means a monolith. Different shifts and turns can be noticed in feminist understanding and conceptualization of women's history as well.

Three methodological approaches stand out in the conceptualization and writing of women's history in India. The earliest approach was to highlight women's contribution and role in the main stream history through the reexamination of sources which are more or less the same as those used in mainstream history. This trend to bring women into 'public gaze' is very much visible and continues to be popular in historical research largely emanating from the Universities in the form of Ph.D. theses. This additive history by making women visible plays an important role. Yet with its emphasis restricted on issues regarded significant from the view point of main stream history, it fails to really weave the fabric of women's history. The second approach is that of genderised history. This approach makes gender as the key to analysis of social realities. It is conceptualized that gender is a fluid category which gets constructed and evolves and develops according to the historical context and the needs of a particular society. It is further emphasized that difference does not suggest equality between men and women but is hierarchical in nature. Power being integral to gender results in the creation of relations of dominance and subordination in society. It is emphasized that any meaningful understanding of women's history rests on understanding this equation between power and gender in any historical socio cultural context, gender itself being a fluid category. A definite improvement on mere addition of women to the pre existing male dominated historical narrative, this too however, ignores women subjectivity as actors with will, potential and rationality to remake the world. Lastly, it is the contributory approach to women's history which privileges women's agency while simultaneously recognizing how patriarchy impedes women's subjectivity and actions. In this sense, this feminist perspective is different from subaltern understanding of history which while focusing on the subaltern voices, tends to make them autonomous subjects. This feminist

6. For a feminist critique of subaltern historiography see Gayatri Chakrabarty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg ed., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Chicago, 1988), pp. 271-313.

perspective gives due recognition to hidden, subversive and at times even conscious way in which women exercise their agency while outwardly remaining part of the repressive normative order formed by patriarchal, ideological and discursive structures which impede, limit and also shape the options available to women. Women's resistance while giving due credit to male hegemonic ideology that defines women's lives is the hallmark of this perspective. In other words, the duality that women individually and collectively are "actors as well as acted upon" is basic to this feminist understanding of women's history.⁷ These three methodological approaches define the historiography of women in Punjab as well.

The question of status and position of women in Punjab in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has been the focus of historian's attention in many diverse ways and a number of serious monographs are available on the subject. In addition to generalized history of women,⁸ some exceptionally accomplished women too have been the focus of historical attention in Punjab.⁹ In addition issues like the British efforts at reform and the impact of colonial efforts on the position of women too have attracted the historian's attention.¹⁰ The activities of European missionaries pertaining to

7. For select writings on feminist theory and history see Nita Kumar ed., *Women as Subjects* {London, 1994}; Catherine R. Stimpson ed., *Women, History and theory: The Essays of Joan Kelley* {Chicago, 1984}; Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* {New York, 1988}; and Anupama Rao, *Gender and Caste: Issues in Contemporary Indian Feminism* {Delhi, 2003}; Kumkum Sangari, "Consent and Agency: Aspects of Feminist Historiography" in Kiran Pawar ed., *Women in Indian History: Social, Economic, Political and Cultural Perspectives* {Delhi, 1996} to name some.
8. Yash Kohli ed., *Women in Punjab*, {Bombay, 1983}; M.K. Gill, *The Role and Status of Women in Sikhism* {Delhi, 1995}; Satish K. Bajaj, "Status of Women in the Pre-Modern Punjab", Punjab History Conference, *Proceedings*, Eighteenth Session, 1983; Raj Kumari Shankar, "Women in Sikhism" in Arvind Sharma ed., *Religion and Women* {Albany, 1984}; Kanwaljit Kaur, "Sikh Women" in Kharak Singh and others eds., *Fundamental issues in Sikh Studies* {Chandigarh, 1992}.
9. B.S. Naggar, *Maharani Jind Kaur: The Mother Queen of Maharaja Dalip Singh* {Delhi, 1975}; Himadri Banerji, "Maharani Jindan in Bengali writings", *The Sikh Review*, vol.36, No 415, pp. 32-7; Jasbir Kaur Ahuja, "Mata Gujari- Consort and Mother", *The Sikh Review*, Vol.41:5 No. 473, pp. 14-16; Narenderpal Singh, "Outstanding Women in Sikhism" in Yash Kohli ed., *The Women of Punjab* {Bombay 1983}; Joginder Singh, "The Illustrious Women of Punjab" in Yash Kohli ed., *The Women of Punjab* {Bombay, 1983}; G Borkar ed., *Selected Speeches and Writings of Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur* {New Delhi, 1961}.
10. Shyamala Bhatia, *Social Change and Politics in Punjab, 1898-1910* {New Delhi, 1984}; Indu Banga ed., *Five Punjabi Centuries: Polity, Economy, Society and Culture, c 1500-1990* {Delhi, 1997}.

women in Punjab have also been taken up for discussion.¹¹ There are a number of interesting studies on the indigenous efforts to bring about improvement in women's condition through socio economic reforms. These have focused on various reform movements like the Arya Samaj, the Dev Samaj, the Namdhari, the Nirankari and the Singh Sabha Movement in Punjab either in their totality or the ideas, programmes and activities of individual reformers towards women's upliftment have been taken up for analysis.¹² Generally these writings, empirical in nature, are congratulatory of the efforts made by these reformist organizations and their leaders for the betterment of women but lately a strong critique of the limitations of the reformist programme from gender perspective has also emerged.¹³ A major contribution has come from the repertoire of feminist historians who have given a whole new perspective to the women question as it emerged during this phase of Punjab history through their analysis of the colonial structures that controlled women's lives as well as the dominant hegemonic ideology that went into the making of gender. The focus here is not so much on the lives and actions of women as the manner in which women were imagined, represented and sought to be transformed by the

11. Reverend Robert Clark, *The Missions of the Church Missionary Society and the Church of England Zenana Mission Society in the Punjab and Sindh*, {London, 1902}.
12. Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th-century Punjab* {Delhi, 1989}; Shiv Kumar Gupta, "Arya Samaj : A potent Factor in National movement for raising womenhood", Punjab History Conference, *Proceedings*, Twenty Fourth Session, 1991; Ganda Singh ed., *The Singh Sabha and other Reform Movements in the Punjab, 1850-1925 : The Panjab Past and Present* {Patiala ,1984}; Surjit Kaur Jolly, *Sikh Revivalist :The Nirankari and Namdhari Movements in Punjab in the Nineteenth Century—A Socio -Religious Study* {New Delhi, 1988}, J.T.F. Jordens, *Dayananda : His life and Causes* {Delhi ,1978} and *Swami Shraddhananda : His Life and Causes* {Oxford ,1981}.
13. Kenneth W. Jones, "Changing Gender Relationship Among Hindus in Early British Punjab", in J.W. Bjorkman ed., *Fundamentalism, Revivalists and Violence in South Asia* {Manohar, New Delhi}; Madhu Kishwar, "The Daughters of Aryavarta", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Vol. 23, No. 2, April- June 1986, pp. 151-86; Anshu Malhotra, "The Moral woman and the Punjabi Society of the Late Nineteenth Century" *Social Scientist*, Vol. 20, Nos. 5-6 , May- June 1992 , pp 34-63 and "Every Woman is a Mother in Embryo-Lala Lajpat Rai and the Womanhood of India", *Social Scientist*, Vol. 22, Nos 1-2, Jan-Feb.1994, pp. 40-63 ; Sunita Pathania, "Lala Lajpat Rai on the Position of Women in India" in J.S. Grewal and Indu Banga eds., *Lala Lajpat Rai in Retrospect: Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Concerns*; Indu Banga, "Socio - Religious Reform and Patriarchy" in Kiran Pawar ed., *Women in Indian History: Social, Economic, Political and Cultural perspectives* {Delhi , 1996} and "The Ideology of Swami Dayananda" in Indu Banga and Jaidev eds., *Cultural Reorientation in Modern India* {Shimla ,1996}.

dominant male hegemonic ideology to suit the requirements of male political and economic agendas in the changing socio economic and political milieu of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Punjab. This perspective also draws attention to the affects such gender construction had on women's perception of the self and how that perception in turn defined the possibilities and limits of their actions. The two works that I have taken for analysis fall under this category of historiographical literature on the social history of Punjab.¹⁴

(II)

The volumes *Gender, Caste and Religious Identities: Restructuring Class in Colonial India* and *Relocating Gender in Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity* by Anshu Malhotra and Doris Jacobsh respectively, published within a year of each other by the Oxford University Press in 2002 and 2003 make an immense contribution to the history of Punjab in general and women's history of Punjab in particular. While Malhotra works on a larger canvass focusing on gender relations among the high caste middle class comprising largely of urban merchants and traders, both among the Hindus and Sikhs of Punjab from 1870's to 1920's, Jacobsh's work concentrates on gender in Sikh history. Though she takes note of gender constructs in the Guru period from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the dominant focus of her work, as she herself admits, is on Punjab following the British annexation and the subsequent Singh Sabha Reform Movement. As such Jacobsh's work too is limited to primarily urban Sikh middle class comprising largely of English educated professionals. Both these works with their feminist perspective help enrich our understanding of gender relations in Punjab in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, not so much in terms of the status, position and role of women, as by way of explication of the imagination, construction, evolvment and entrenchment of gender in the historical socio-cultural context of Punjab in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of particular interest are the ways in which the two scholars have interpreted the forces that necessitated and went into the construction of new gender relations, the ideological postulations used for its sculpting and tools used for the propagation of these gendered constructs among the larger society. The implication of these gender constructs for the lives of women, negative and positive, are also highlighted by Malhotra and Jacobsh. The scholars have also drawn our

14. Anshu Malhotra, *Gender, Caste and Religious Identities: Restructuring Class in Colonial Punjab* {New Delhi, 2002}; and Doris R. Jacobsh, *Relocating Gender In Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity* {New Delhi, 2003}.

attention to the fact that though women were rarely a party to the making of gender categories of men and women, they certainly had a role in their solidification as well as subversion in several ways. It is precisely around the handling of these issues by the two scholars that we intend to weave this paper.

(III)

It is well known that the British critique of Indian society on the status of women was responsible for the pivotal initiative by the Indian reformers to transform the "degraded" nation through reforms in the condition of women by rediscovering and refurbishing of their respective religious traditions. This constituted major aspect of the Indian renaissance. However, the form it took varied according to the specific needs and aspirations of the groups involved in the project of reform and modernization of tradition in a given historical, socio-economic, political and cultural context.

Both Malhotra and Jacobsh uphold that the emergence of middle class in Punjab under the colonial set up of the late nineteenth century had significant impact on gender relations and encouraged the re-examination of women's roles and place in society. However, this review had less to do with actual realities of women's lives as with the needs and aspirations of the newly emerging middle classes. In other words, they see the women question as taken up by the middle class high caste urban elite in Punjab as an attempt by this elite emerging from the urban and semi urban small businessmen, money lenders and other professional groups to articulate a view point and set of attitudes which conformed to their needs and aspirations in the new situation created by an increasingly market oriented social set up under the colonial regime. As upper castes formed a significant ingredient of the middle class in Punjab, Malhotra argues that it was the need to "preserve" the "inherited" advantages and privileges that flowed out of the high caste status and anxiety about the danger of losing these privileges, while simultaneously taking on the 'challenges of modernity' had serious implications on the reworking of gender relations by the high caste middle class Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab. The economic and political insecurity experienced by this class due to favourable colonial attitudes toward the Jat peasantry, coupled with "paranoia" about possible erasure of social privileges, made them turn to their own reformist organizations to "create and preserve a flattering sense of the self".¹⁵ It is further contended that both "attitude of insecurity and self enhancing identity

15. Malhotra, p.31.

meant the adoption of certain postures toward women which significantly contributed to reshaping upper caste middle class patriarchy in this period" {Emphasis added}.¹⁶ Markers of high class status including rituals, traditions and attitudes towards women {daughters, wives and widows} came to be reassessed. Since right conduct for women and control over their sexuality were viewed as "hall marks" of high caste status, the middle class high caste men "seeking superior status" spent "substantive energy in re-organizing women's lives reiterating norms and correct behaviour for them, regulating their relationship with public spaces and with the castes and classes marked low." Malhotra emphasizes that "In quest for appropriate class behaviour" suitable to the needs of middle class high caste Punjabi elite, women were re-situated into caste and religion. The emergence of identity politics in Punjab further made it necessary to review and redefine women's relationship to their religious categories and a "firmer religious identity was sought to be bestowed on them" by the high caste middle class elite playing the politics of identity in their search for superior status and power.¹⁷ Malhotra admits to the difficulty of showing the significance of caste among the Singh Sabha reformers particularly in view of the dominant role of Tat Khalsa on the issue of Sikh identity as opposed to the Sanatan Sikhs. This group not only emphasized the distinct identity of the Sikhs as being separate from the Hindus but also condemned caste. However, Malhotra overcomes this difficulty by postulating that the attitude of the Singh Sabha towards caste showed considerable equivocation and ambivalence.¹⁸ She further hypothesizes that despite the intellectual tradition of denial of caste among the Sikhs and re-conceptualization of caste among sections of the Hindus under the Arya Samaj, caste continued to be seen as an important "marker of status and organizing principle of daily life" in Punjab.¹⁹ The control over women's sexuality and reproductivity was "central to maintaining social privilege" comes out clearly in the Sabhaite writings on the desired reforms for women and the roles they were expected to fulfill. It is argued that the ideal of *Pativrata* wife for women championed by the Singh Sabha with "axioms of chastity and intense domestic labour on which the ideal rested" were meant for the high caste women who alone could "afford to forsake labour outside the home and afford to guard their honour against all odds".²⁰ Jacobsh's work however, does not give much

16. *Ibid.*, p.3.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

19. *Ibid.*, p.2.

20. *Ibid.*, p.43.

salience to caste in determining Sikh ideological assumptions on gender affecting the process of construction of feminine identity undertaken by the Singh Sabha reformers. According to her the Singh Sabha reform agenda for women was the product of need to establish a distinct Sikh identity which among other things, was linked to their aspiration for retaining and perpetuating the favourite position that this group had so far enjoyed under the colonial rule emanating from the "politics of similarity" practiced by the British in their relations with the Jat Sikhs in Punjab.²¹ Jacobsh contends that the Tat Khalsa group comprising largely of lower caste Jat Sikhs that dominated the Singh Sabha reform movement in championing the cause of separate Sikh identity, was the product of British educational system. Its educational advancement had facilitated this group to rise to positions of leadership thereby creating a professional middle class among the lower castes of the Sikhs. Their new found status did not "necessarily bring with it acceptance from the Sikhs particularly by the traditional elite comprising the aristocracy and the religious orthodoxy". According to Jacobsh the "incongruence between age old notions of caste and their new middle class world view" was a potent factor in determining Tat Khalsa reform initiatives involving women's role and status in society.²² Jacobsh views this as suggestive of the adherence and commitment, on the part of at least a small minority of educated elite, to the ideals of modernity.²³ However, this idealism also carried within it the need to secure and preserve the privileged position of the Sikh elite through larger share of the colonial patronage. Given the distinct minority status of the Sikhs in Punjab, this was sought to be achieved by the establishment and reinforcement of a separate Sikh identity. The communal interests combined with economic and political designs of the Sikh middle class elite were integral to the construction of separate Sikh identity with deep implications for women. In Jacobsh words "as the women question was integral to the safeguarding of religious identity, the Sikh women as the traditional bearers of tradition and observers of popular forms became important sites on which the margins of Sikh identity were constructed".²⁴ Both scholars, despite the difference in their understanding on motives behind reform endeavours, share a consensus that the rhetoric of social reform on the question of women often had a very different political

21. Jacobsh, pp. 82-83.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

agenda and women were seldom part of the process involving their rejuvenation and transformation.

(IV)

In whatever way we deconstruct the motives of social reformers, one thing is clear that by the end of nineteenth century a recognizable gender ideology designed and executed almost exclusively by middle class men among the Hindu and Sikh communities was in place that defined the changes to be instituted in the women's lives through reforms. The indigenous notions surrounding women's sexuality and the need of controlling it, her problematic relation to caste and pure religiosity and Victorian concept of masculine and feminine jointly contributed to the ideological postulations that defined and constructed "new women" in Punjab. This "new women" was to be free from some of the worst conditions of her existence, while remaining devoted to the home and family under strict patriarchal controls. The role model devised was that of an ideal *Pativrata* duly modified, re-conceptualized and recharged to suit the requirement of modern society and its patriarchal structures. The new *pativrata* was characterized as an educated woman, free from the shackles of *pardah*, accomplished in domestic skills, devoted to the husband and family, an intelligent companion, an ideal mother, producer and nurturer of a strong masculine race and custodian of tradition, yet subservient and subordinate to the husband.²⁵ Malhotra sees in the deployment of the ideology of *pativrata* on the part of the high caste Hindus and Sikh reformers a means of not only ensuring the subordination of women but also a gateway to securing high caste class status and improvement of their economic status, through establishing control over women's sexuality and ensuring her chastity {symbols of high status} and utilization of her domestic labour.²⁶

Malhotra contends that this potent *pativrata* ideology also helped these high caste middle class reformers to conceptualize and deal with women having other identities like those of single women, daughters and widows. According to Malhotra a "dependent, but auspicious *Pativrata* however, made other women who needed to be independent for instance a widow, look as if they were a drain on fragile resources and their very existence was to the detriment of the patrilineage and patrimony. The construct of the *pativrata* was a weapon with which to subjugate all women."²⁷ Jacobsh also highlights *pativrata* as the ideal for women in the imagination of the Singh Sabha reformers, but has a different

25. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

26. Malhotra, pp. 117-21.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

perspective to offer for its conception. According to Jacobsh, the Institution of Khalsa and the ensuing polarization of gender had resulted in equations of dominance and subordination in the Sikh community creating a highly masculine, hierarchical and patriarchal ethos among the Sikhs.²⁸ Hence, the Victorian notions of manliness that perceived women as weak, passive, fragile needing protection and control and that by implication relegated women to the domestic arena had special appeal for the Sikh reformers. This melding of the hyper masculine Sikh ethos with Victorian notions of gender influenced the way women were imagined and constructed by the educated middle class elite among the Sikhs. The Victorian construct of a wife as a helpmate of the man and an intelligent companion was adopted by the Sikh reformers in a modified form to create the image of an ideal *pativrata* by including within its fold the deeply ingrained work ethics of the Sikhs. Thus, it revolved around the axioms of chastity and intense labour of the Sikh women both domestic and gratuitous rendered in service of the public cause or the cause of the Sikh community.²⁹ Malhotra, however contests that there was a new desire for "companionship" in marriages put forward by some historian prior to the publication of Jacobsh's work.³⁰ She does not deny that there was an element of expectation of companionship in the conjugal relationship however; to say that these notions were fully developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in Punjab would be far from the reality.³¹ To further emphasize her point, Malhotra states that given the new power structures put in place by concepts like *pativrata* that emphasized husband's superiority and insisted on meritorious service on the part of wife, the idea of companionship could exist only at the "whim of the husband."³²

This ideology of *Pativrata* women could be put to multiple uses. In the first instance it helped to establish a structure in which women were happy and willing partners in their own subordination. It also helped highlight the difference as well as similarities between the cultures of the ruler and the ruled, thereby paving way for the preservation and furtherance of the politico-economic interests of the middle class elite.

Malhotra and Jacobsh devote considerable attention to the process by

28. Jacobsh, p.82.

29. *Ibid.*, p.135.

30. Madhu Kishwar, "The Daughters of Aryavarta", *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. 23, No. 2, April-June 1986, pp.151-86; and Partha Chatterjee, "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question", in Sangari and Vaid, *op.cit.*

31. Malhotra, pp. 118-19 and 123-24.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

which this gendered identity was constructed, percolated and weaved into the social fabric for its wider acceptance. It needs to be emphasized that all these processes were simultaneously at work. Education was one of the central means by which the reformers modified the prevailing understanding on women and also defined, constructed and then actively enshrined the new ideology into society.³³ Education was simultaneously used for sculpting the “new woman and also for defining the limits of her modernity”. Both the scholars have highlighted this point. The women were to be given strictly supervised limited education to enhance their abilities and accomplishments in the domestic arena, but in no way was this to lead to her economic independence or participation in the public sphere reserved exclusively for the men. Every effort was made by the reformers to ensure that this was strictly complied with. Courses designed exclusively for the girls in the schools were one such method. Jacobsh and Malhotra through their innovative interpretation of the instruction booklets on daily activities of the girls, the articles and editorials in the school magazines, women focused literature and the propagandist material printed by the reformist organizations, draw our attention to the level of energy that went into raising public consciousness about women’s appropriate behaviour, attitude and position in society and the role education was to play in the sculpting of that role. Along with general similarities in the approach of the Hindu and Sikh reformers to women’s education, the point of difference that emerges especially in the twentieth century when identity politics had come to assume significance, the Punjabi Hindu elite among the reformers wanted women to be educated through the Hindi medium and the Sikhs insisted on the use of Punjabi in the Gurmukhi script. The fact that the controversy around language was not free from gender connotations becomes apparent as the language was linked with the honour of women by the Sikh elite to serve its political agenda, is highlighted by Malhotra and Jacobsh.³⁴

The fashioning of the ideal of a *pativrata* woman combining within her the virtues of chastity, honour, piety, hard work, self less service, devotion to the husband and family needed the creation of its opposite to ensuring its firm installation and acceptance. The image of *Kuppatti*— a distasteful, bad and uncontrolled {autonomous} woman of the popular culture was constructed.. This is often the subject of various stories, novels, poetic expression as well as the cheap palpable literature called *Jhagrras* and *Kissas* written by the rural poets. According to Malhotra these writers were second rung social reformers

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 144-55 and Jacobsh, pp. 127-28.

34. Malhotra, p.147 and Jacobsh, pp. 148-50.

having stakes in social dominance. They played an immense role in bridging the gap between urban and rural populace by carrying the dominant reformist ideas into the wider public.³⁵

The patriarchal need to assert authority that was integral to *pativrata* ideology also meant intervention in and displacement and reorganization of the existential popular cultural practices and rituals of women, which to the reformists were not just offensive but also having the potential for subversion of patriarchal power relations. So many of women's popular practices both within the home and outside came to be frowned upon and condemned by the reformers. These included *Ritan*, *Siyapa*, visiting *Pirs*, parodying of figures of authority, singing of obscene songs in *Mohallas* to name a few. Malhotra feels that this was due to women occupying "public space without conforming to the prescriptions of the reformist elite, thereby challenging the men's power over them".³⁶ Jacobsh sees in this the added need to bring women into the more formal Sikh religion, to suit the political agenda of the Sikh elite, as Sikh women indulging in common practices with women of other religions was perceived as an obstacle to consolidating a distinct Sikh identity. Women's collectivities of all kinds were suspect. Women's time spent in the neighbourhood was sought to be regulated to only few hours only and that to only to discuss religious matters. The *Pativrata* wife had to "take over the women of popular culture in order to build power and prestige of men" stresses Malhotra.³⁷ Reformers' attempts to controlling women's bodies, regulating their actions and deciding even the way they dressed up along with serious efforts at controlling the areas traditionally regarded by women as their domain, added up to and was suggestive of what Jacobsh calls a "novel apportioning of social power relations among male and female Hindus and Sikhs."³⁸ Despite the reformists' claims about their noble concern for women there was, practically no challenge to the patriarchal structures in their vision of reforms for women. Both the scholars seem to share the view that the reformers need to recreate a new social order was dominated more by their own needs and aspirations and had almost nothing to do with what women needed or wanted. This would perhaps also explain why women were neither consulted nor included in a project which was supposed to bring revolutionary changes in their every day existence. Unlike the social histories written from the nationalist

35. Malhotra, pp. 13 and 169.

36. Jacobsh, p. 179.

37. Malhotra, p. 198.

38. Jacobsh, pp. 179-194.

framework eulogizing the social reformers and their huge contribution to reforming and thereby uplifting the position of women, these two works foreground how the gender was imagined and constructed and the limitations of the reformist programme pertaining to women. They underscore how the reformist agenda through transformation and at times even replacement of old patriarchal structures with new ones to suit the needs of the contemporary society, in many cases restricted women's choices even more than earlier and added to their oppression. What makes these works significant is their attempt to trace and locate women's own responses to the seemingly transformational and radical agenda for women initiated by the male reformers. The question what the reforms meant for women, how did they perceive them and what was their reaction resulted in the two authors uncovering evidence that points to women's agency in terms of women's consent, contribution and at times also contestation of the gender constructs. The general response was one of willing acceptance and consensus on the part of the middle class women, the prime constituency targeted as recipients of the reformist agenda, especially as the need for reforms was advocated in the name of going back to the pure, revered traditions be it the *Vedas* or the Sikh tradition propounded by the Gurus.³⁹ Moreover, the reform ideology by suggesting respectability and dignity for women as mothers of noble race had provided some value addition to their lives.⁴⁰ This must have held an appeal for women to become willing partners in their own subordination, explicates Malhotra. As a matter of fact women were not just passive recipients of reforms. A few of them were also involved in active implementation and propagation of the reformist agenda. These women, working within the permissible limits imposed on them by the new patriarchal ideology with reference to their roles as *pativratas* or widows, took advantage of the opportunity provided by the discourse of reforms, to carry forward the reformist agenda among other women. These included a sizable number of women teachers, *pracharaks* and *upadeshaks*. Having interiorized the ideology of their own subaltern status, these women contributed to its spread as agents. As shown by Jacobsh women in the Sikh community were apparently more active. However, this activism was not generally the outcome of women's own needs and rights. It was motivated more by the need to invigorating the Sikh community.⁴¹ While discussing women's

39. Malhotra, p. 202; and Jacobsh, p. 243.

40. Malhotra, p.157.

41. Jacobsh, pp. 240-42.

responses, one must not overlook that women after all live in and also have stakes in power sharing in the patriarchal value system. This should account for women's engagement with the project aimed at their refashioning. The process of reform, by its very nature, also opened space for some of these women to move beyond the agenda and define their own values while still working within the roles prescribed for them, is also highlighted by the two scholars.⁴² Jacobsh also draws our attention to the fact that the very concept of equality on which the reforms were notionally premised, opened doors for the Sikh women to demanding the extension of their ritual space. Malhotra clearly shows how feminist reading of the sources or reading against the grain produces an understanding very different from those provided by the conventional histories dealing with the women question. For example the frequent references to mulish women who refused to change their ways despite reformers' continuous admonitions, in the flourishing genre of *Jhagrras* and *Kissas*, Malhotra finds signs of women's timid questioning of the ideal of *pativrata*. Any woman who resisted following the prescribed norms of behaviour defined by the reformers came to be dubbed as *Kuppatti*, the antithesis of *pativrata* of the reformers. *Kuppatti* is indicative of women's resistance.⁴³ Furthermore, the fact that there was some sort of reluctance and even refusal on the part of women to silently accept the reformer's onslaught over their existential cultural practices despite constant criticism by the reformers also comes through clearly in the literature of the time. Women especially in the rural areas largely treated this criticism with disdain and at times also with ridicule and found ways to subverting this intrusion into what they regarded as their own domain.⁴⁴ Mostly this contestation remained subtle, passive and individual in nature. However, occasionally though very rarely, we come across open questioning of male reformers' masculine view point and the limitations of their agenda for women. These expressions of discontent by ordinary women, happy in their anonymity, help us understand that women's concerns while common with men were not always identical. While men were more concerned with women's status and position within the four walls of domesticity as *pativratas*, widows and mothers, these women by raising the issues like women's agony at her premature dislocation from patrilocal family, her subjugation and oppression at the hands of insensitive relatives within the

42. Malhotra, pp. 155-63; and Jacobsh, p. 243.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

44. Jacobsh, pp. 245-46.

matrimonial family, combined with unreal expectations from the husbands as well as the reformers bring forth these differences. In addition they enrich our knowledge about women's experiences with in the domestic sphere.⁴⁵ These women writers, who by no means could be categorized as front runner reformist, hit the nail on the head in their understanding that it was male exclusive control over sources of power such as knowledge and means of production and its denial to women which was responsible for women's degrading position and the solution lay in women acquiring education and control over property.⁴⁶ Malhotra and Jacobsh through their painstaking effort in unearthing the evidence have succeeded in establishing that not all women were mere silent spectators in the processes involving gender construction. Their response might have varied in form from complicity, consent, consensus or contestation, but they certainly were not silent and passive recipients of the reforms doled out to them by the middle class male reformers. To quote Malhotra what emerges is the "History of manipulation and suppression" on the one hand and "complicity and resistance" on the other.⁴⁷ By highlighting the women's response and agency, the two volumes by Malhotra and Jacobsh give a new perspective to our understanding of gender relations in context of the social reform movements of the Hindus and the Sikhs in Punjab, hitherto missing in the earlier historical accounts— imperialist, nationalist, Marxist, post-modernist or even early feminists which give no space to women's agency and activism. In this regard, Malhotra and Jacobsh's works are a welcome addition. At the same time, there are some serious inadequacies some incidental and others arising out of the very perspective of these two scholars. We will attend to the incidental limitations of the work in the first instance. Both works are confined to discussion of gender relations only among middle class in colonial Punjab. Lower class/caste women are left out of their analyses.⁴⁸ Moreover, while focusing on the intelligentsia leading the reforms; the variations

45. Malhotra, pp.158-60 and 185-191.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-63.

47. *Ibid.*, p.163.

48. Charu Gupta has probed the didactic literature and domestic manuals in Hindi principally addressed to the middle class, high caste Hindu women to probe the representation of *Dalit* women perceived in binary opposition to the upper caste women. The sharp representation of women along caste and class lines in this literary genre is suggestive of the female hierarchy along with caste hierarchy among the upper caste and *Dalit* women in colonial north India. See Charu Gupta, "{Mis} Representing the *Dalit* Woman : Reification of Caste and Gender Stereotypes in the Hindi Didactic Literature of Colonial India", *The Indian Historical Review*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2, July 2008, pp. 101-24.

in their approaches and the rationale behind the differences are not accounted for. Jacobsh to some extent talks about the differences among various factions within the Sikh community on the issue of reforms such as those of the Namdharis, the Sanatan Sikhs and the Tat Khalsa groups. However, this is done in a passing way. The central focus of her work remains on the Singh Sabha reformists' intelligentsia among the Sikhs. Malhotra on the other hand, treats the high caste middle class Hindu reformers as a single homogeneous category-driven by common anxieties and ambitions. Thus understood, almost no significant notice is taken by the two scholars, Malhotra in particular, of the differences that defined the approaches of the so called orthodoxy, revivalists and the liberals among the reformers on the women question. An understanding of these differences within the middle class can perhaps help provide a clearer picture of the pulls, pressures and tussles that went into the making of gender in Punjab during this period.⁴⁹ For example, like revivalists the liberals or the so called reformers too, had sought justification for reforms by referencing to more authentic and older scriptural tradition with a view to getting wider acceptability for reforms. However, the liberals largely relied on legal action as the harbinger of change, thereby recognizing women as a legal person having rights. The revivalists on the contrary offered change as coming from the scriptures as interpreted by them. Thus, change in women's position was not conceptualized as a matter of legal right by the revivalists. Similarly Namdhari's seemingly more liberal approach towards gender in supporting enlargement of their space and involvement at all levels needs to be contextualized and put to more critical examination. Distinctions like these need to be considered for the proper understanding of the way women were imagined and then reformed to construct a particular kind of hierarchical and patriarchal society in Punjab in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These limitations can be addressed and dealt with by other scholars interested in understanding the gender construction in Punjabi society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The inadequacies emerging out of the perspective are however, more problematic.

(V)

The perspective defining the two works is influenced by a certain critique of modernity within the feminist theory as well as the post-modernist

49. For distinctions within the middle class see Veena Naregal, *Language, Politics, Elites, and the Public Sphere* {Delhi, 2001} and Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife and Hindu Nation, Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism* {Delhi, 2001}.

understanding of Indian modernity and the Marxist -feminist understanding on social reforms given the colonial context in India. The former perceive the whole agenda of reforms as a product of western enlightenment thus, limited and suspect. Their argument is that modern notions of gender rights in the public domain were premised on public-private split whereby private "disempowerment and the subordination of women were masked by the bestowal of public rights." The Marxist -Feminist perspective views the Indian bourgeoisie class as a product of colonial capitalism which was modern yet dependent. As such, this class, in order to align itself more closely with the "domesticity of the colonial masters and the ways of modern capitalists" attempted to recast its women and its gender practices. What followed was a new form of patriarchy that provided the rationale for reforms without any serious questioning of the prevailing gender equations.⁵⁰ Both these approaches inform Malhotra and Jacobsh's understanding on women's question in Punjab, with minor variations. Malhotra links the efforts at reforms made by the high caste Hindu middle class elite to their anxiety, arising out of their understanding of their unflavoured position with the British rulers, to preserve and perpetuate their high caste class and status privileges under the colonial regime. Jacobsh reduces the same to Sikh intelligentsia's desideratum to securing more privileges for themselves and their community from the colonial masters by establishing their proximity with Victorian notions of gender on the one hand and more importantly for establishing their distinct identity from that of the Hindus. In this search of gains and wresting concessions the women were only used as markers and signifiers of caste, class, status or identity. Both the scholars uphold that the reformists' position on women was merely an expression of the immediate personal needs of the middle class male elite who aimed expediently to find a space for themselves through a process of adjustment with the existing social system without posing any challenge to its dominant structures. That this was the prime motivating force and that each and every action of the middle class reformers in Punjab be the Hindus of the Arya Samaj or the Sikhs of the Singh Sabha movement was driven by this consideration, runs through the narrative in these two volumes. What emerged was a vision of society in which women were to be modernized yet subordinated. Reforms carried within them the prescription of women's disempowerment to suit the needs of the patriarchal world view of the elite.

50. I have drawn liberally on Introduction of Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar, *op.cit.*, for the concluding part of this paper. I gratefully acknowledge it.

Both the scholars brilliantly draw our attention again and again to the disempowering consequences of the reforms for women. Having hypothesized thus, Malhotra and Jacobsh see all out efforts ranging from persuasion, coercion and manipulation at play on the part of the reformers towards that end. Viewed in this manner the reformists in Punjab appear to have redefined women's roles as daughters, wives and mothers to conform to the requirements of the patriarchal family to become operative in a fast changing socio- economic scenario, and to have devised ways and means for women to fit into the new life styles adopted by the educated men in the new socio-economic and political set up.

This view however, appears to underestimate the liberal human content of the reform movement in the Punjab and cuts out all those dimensions of liberal thinking which envision a rational social order based on equity and freedom for all. The mental horizons, values, and attitudes of the educated middle class are seen in all essential respects as traditional. They who spearheaded the reform movement are supposed to have been touched by modernity only to the extent of being willing to play the game of survival in the new conditions of increasing competitiveness. They did not, in other words, experience the exhilarating liberational pull which is the form modernity usually takes when it emerges with the rise of capitalism in any society. An increased sense of dignity and freedom of the individual, an urge to create a rational society based on equality and justice which are the hallmarks of any perspective and value system coming under modernity were supposedly missing in the middle class intelligentsia among the Hindus and the Sikhs in Punjab. While conceding that the reformist thinking on women did not involve any radical challenge to the established patriarchal institutional and social structures, it has to be stressed that it did visualize a partial modification of patriarchy by incorporating within its framework ideas, values and attitudes that constitute modernity. Sarkar's assessment of the reforms as "the first clear sign of guilty and self -introspection by privileged, male, upper-caste, middle class intelligentsia, compromised with colonial governance and yet convinced that the present order was not a just one, even when it benefited them" sums up the situation. The scholars who explain the reformist stance as being rooted in mere expediency do not do justice to this positive side of the reformist thinking. This negative understanding of the reform movement is not without merit. The critique of Indian modernity and the exposition of its limits in terms of its agenda as well as the colonial context that limited its liberational possibilities provided by various other scholars have certainly enriched our understanding

that the model of modernity does not always and necessarily move along a path of continuous and steady progress. Rather it is a "complex and contradictory formation". So we are not contending here that the liberational potential of modernity, which manifested itself in the perspective and value system of the educated middle class in Punjab, was fully materialized in the Hindu and Sikh reformers in Punjab. All that is being maintained here is that, though not sufficiently strong to overturn patriarchy, this liberational aspect of modernity in the reformist thinking did lead to a greater sensitivity to the issue of women's dignity as human beings. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain the painstaking efforts undertaken and considerable hardships that these people suffered in the face of individual and collective insults at the hands of their distracters. Furthermore, the fact of the coalescence of some of these reformers with the national movement for independence through which the liberational potential of Indian modernity found a more vigorous and bolder expression can only be explained if we acknowledge the presence of liberal humanitarian value system encompassing and influencing their thinking. Another draw back of the perspective is the private/public dichotomy hypothesis used by these two scholars, like some others before them, to analyzing women question. This framework tends to freeze the reformers in time and fails to take note of the changes that were bound to take place in their perspective under the influence of the rising forces of anti-colonialism and emerging nationalism. Furthermore, women's own initiatives and clamouring for public roles by the end of the nineteenth century would have required addressing on the part of the reformers. Both Malhotra and Jacobsh take note of changes that were gradually creeping in women's roles as a result of the very logic of reforms as well as women's own efforts at forcing open the doors of public domain. This however, does not alter the framework that they had initially adopted. This failure perhaps would account for the reason that both the volumes conclude before the emergence of the mass movement in Punjab which gave women far wider space and their roles outside the domesticity were not only tolerated but given recognition as well.

In the end I seek your indulgence for presenting before you some very tentative thoughts on the subject in the hope that it would stimulate further interest and engagement with gender in the history of Punjab.

CONCEPT OF MARTIAL RACE AND THE SIKHS

Nazer Singh*

The process of militarization of Sikh community had been taken notice by the scholars of Sikh history during the *Misal* period or the 18th century as well as during the period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh¹ (1793-1839). Author of the *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* referred to the shift from Khatri to Jat leadership in the Khalsa during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.² We are further told that most of the big *masands* of the Guru were the *Jats*. W.H. McLeod writes that Sikhism got a new feature for itself when it came to represent the dominance of the Jat culture which Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed in 1699 as the essentials of Sikhism. "Love of freedom and warlike spirit of the Jats could no longer be denied a place within the system."³ Likewise, Irfan Habib believes that the Jats were peasants who had to bear a heavy burden of land revenue and a great degree of oppression of the ruling classes of the Mughal empire. "This situation was bound to provoke peasant revolts."⁴ In fact, the militant development of the Sikhs during the 17th and 18th centuries was due to the armed violence by the Jat peasantry especially under Banda Singh. Significantly, *Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla* of April 28, 1711, showed how Banda Singh was being joined in his army by the Muslims for he had assured them that they would enjoy full religious liberty while in his army.⁵ Whether someone was a Hindu or Muslim in Banda's army, he was addressed as a *Singh*.⁶ The Mughals and Afghans continued to suppress the Sikhs but the two failed to dispirit them. In fact, Ahmad Shah Durrani "met his Waterloo in the Punjab and surrendered to the Sikhs the charge of their mother-land and bowed out in abject humiliation after repeated attacks for two decades."⁷ Little wonder if

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1. For the Sikh *Misals*, see Bhagat Singh, *A History of Sikh Misals* (Punjabi Uni., Patiala: 1993) PREFACE and pp. 421-46. For Ranjit Singh, see, Fauja Singh Bajwa, *The Military System of the Sikhs* (Delhi, 1964), *passim*.
2. Bhagat Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 422-23.
3. *Ibid.*, p.423.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, p.426.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Bhagat Singh, PREFACE-VI.

the Persian writers like Bute Shah and Ali-ud-Din Mufti had described the Dal Khalsa by the term of *groh-i-Singhan*.⁸ Interestingly the British writers such as George Forster and Francklin W. had praised the Sikhs and their horses due to their training in guerrilla tactics of warfare. Francklin says that the Sikhs were experts in their counter attacks that were unique in India because the attack was done by the Sikhs with "an alacrity and activity unparalleled by other people of India".⁹ He had written it in the year 1798.

The link between the military actions and the political life of the Punjab people did not come to an end with Francklin or by the end of 18th century. The occupation of Agra and Delhi by the British in the year 1803 opened the military system of Ranjit Singh for its modernization or westernization through the European adventurers especially after the real Waterloo in 1815. In fact, the uprising of 1857 led Tory thinkers in England as well as Karl Marx to describe the event of 1857 as an event of national resistance by the Bengal army supported by the peasants of Avadh and north India. By his article entitled 'The Indian Question'¹⁰ through *New York Daily Tribune* dated 14th August, 1857, Karl Marx wrote how John Bull was treating the events of 1857 in India as a military mutiny while the event was in truth 'a national revolt' caused by the British conquest. To Marx the British conquest of India including Punjab reminded the brutalization of Ireland. For these reasons he described this conquest as an exercise of 'slave trade' committed by England.¹¹ Impressed by the formulations of Marx, the Indian scholars like Joshi and Panikkar have taken 1857 as a popular revolutionary movement with a 'soldier-peasant democracy'¹² as its prime achievement.

How did the British colonialism treat Punjab after 1849 i.e. by its annexation to their rule? What was the influence of 1857 upon the social or cultural life of the people of the region during the century from 1848 to 1947? How should we see the relationship between Punjab and colonialism during the 19th century? These questions have been dealt with by Tan Tai Yong in his Ph.D. thesis¹³ made to Cambridge University in the early 1990's and published under the title *The Garrison State* by the SAGE Publications in 2005.

8. *Ibid.*, p.430.

9. *Ibid.*, p.439.

10. See, Crystal Bartolowich and Neil Lazarus, *Marxism, Modernity and Post-Colonial Studies* (Cambridge Univ. Press : 2002), pp. 81-101.

11. *Ibid.*, p.85.

12. *Ibid.*, p.92.

13. Tan Tai Yong, *The Garrison State* (Sage : New Delhi, 2005), *Preface*, pp. 12-15.

The sub-title of the book is 'The Military, Government and Society in Colonial Punjab, 1849-1947'. The author's PREFACE shows how Punjab's colonial experience had a feature comprising of 'its close and sustained relationship with the military'.¹⁴ Yong treats the post 1857 Punjab as 'the military labour market' established by the British to shake and shatter the conventional basis of the Bengal army—in shape of north central India upto 1857. We are told that the creation of military labour market in north-western India was "centred on the old Sikh empire in the Punjab" that emerged by 1880's as 'the principal recruiting ground of the Indian army' engaged in *the Great Game*. Obviously Yong's work deals with "the impact of military in the development of colonial Punjab."¹⁵ Can we understand the process of militarization of Punjab by the British and its relationship with the emergence of modern states in South-East Asia after 1947 ? The reply may be positive in the case of Pakistan and its military character since its birth. Seen in this light Punjab and its History after 1857 emerges as that of 'recruiting ground'¹⁶ as administered by the British through its civil-military regime. The regime expressed itself through its decisions such as the Land Alienation Act of 1900 and the Colonialization Bill of 1907 besides the suppression of the Gurudwara Reform Movement during 1920's. Thus, theory of martial race became a feature of British polity in Punjab and its administration by the 20th century. Tan Tai Yong had shown the social and political repercussions of the militarization of Punjab under the British. He writes how a century of British rule over Punjab led to the partition of her. The partition unleashed a violent reaction on an unprecedented scale.¹⁷ Contrary to the Punjab case, the partition of Bengal was bloodless. Punjab was different from Bengal as the former was 'the outcome of the region's long association with the military'. The story of violence or military domination did not stop at or end in 1947. Yong feels that the military dominated state of Pakistan on the one hand, and the "militant ethno nationalist struggle of the Sikhs in Indian Punjab from the 1960's on the other, attested to the persistence of the military legacy in the region."¹⁸

14. *Ibid.*, p.12.

15. *Ibid.*, p.13.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

17. *Ibid.*, p.20.

18. *Ibid.*

CONCEPT OF MARTIAL RACES AND THE SIKHS

*Nirmal Singh**

India has been a melting pot of religions. In this country the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Christians and many other religious sects live side by side in relative harmony. The Hindu religion is taken as the oldest but with the time it became rigid and ritualistic. As a result Jainism, Buddhism and later Sikhism emerged as new religions. Though both Jainism and Buddhism merged in Hinduism but the Sikh religion maintained its separate identity. Hindu society was divided into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishya and Shudras of whom Kshatriyas were given the task of defence and they were recognized as martial section of the society. In Sikhism this stratification was discarded and all the Sikhs were given the equal status in the society. In this paper an attempt has been made to find out either the Sikhs were recognized as martial people by the British or they possessed the martial tradition already.

Martial race theory is an ideology based on the assumption that certain ethnic groups are inherently more martially inclined than others. This term originally was used by the British who observed that the Scottish highlanders were more fierce in battle than others in Britain and extended this concept to India, where they classified each ethnic group into one of the two categories : 'Martial' and 'Non-Martial'. A 'martial race' was typically considered brave and well-built for fighting but was also described as 'unintelligent'.¹ The 'non-martial races' were those whom the British believed to be unfit for battle because of their sedentary lifestyles. Of late, this concept has been challenged as imperialistic and based on racial stereotypes.²

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1. Rand, Gavin (March 2006), "Martial Races and Imperial Subjects : Violence and Governance in Colonial India 1857-1914", *European Review of History* (Routledge), 13 (1) : 1-20 (http://viswiki.com/en/ethnic_group retrieved on 08-03-2009).
2. See, Heather Streets, *Martial Races : The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester University Press, 2004).

The British regarded the 'martial races' as valiant and strong but also intellectually challenged. There was lack of initiative or leadership qualities among them to command large troops. They felt that these races were politically subservient or docile to authority also. For these reasons, the 'martial races' theory did not apply in the case of officer recruitment, which was based on social class and loyalty to the British Raj.³

The 'Martial Race' theory is said to be emphasized after the revolt of 1857. It has been described as a clever British effort to divide and rule the people of India for their own political ends.⁴ According to the critics of this theory, the Indian rebellion of 1857 might have played a role in reinforcing the British belief in 'martial races'. During the revolt the Indian sepoys particularly in Bengal, mutinied against the colonial rulers, but Punjabis, Gurkhas, Kumaoni/Kumaunis and Garhwalis remained loyal. They not only refrained from joining the mutineers, but also helped the British to defeat the rebels. From then on, this theory was used to the hilt to accelerate recruitment from among these 'races', whilst discouraging enlistment of 'disloyal' Bengalis and high-caste Hindus who had sided with the rebels during the war.⁵

The British declared Ahirs, Awans, Bulochs, Bhumihars, Dogras, Gurkhas, Garhwalis, Gujjars, Jats, Kamboj, Mukkulathors, Nairs, Pathans, Rajputs, Sainis, Sikhs and Tanolis etc. as people of the martial races.⁶ The Marathas were classified as non martial race ignoring the military achievements of the Maratha Empire. There was already a lack of national and political unity in India. The British exploited the situation and encouraged a sense of competition among different communities ensuring that there was no repeat of Indian revolt of 1857.⁷ Thus, this theory was a colonial construct that was produced and propagated by the British who recruited a large number of soldiers of the communities referred as martial races for services in the British army. These Indian troops were rather

3. Omar Khalidi, *Ethnic Group Recruitment in the Indian Army*; <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/material-race>> retrieved on 08-03-2009).

4. Shultz, Richard; Dew, Andrea, *Insurgents, Terrorists and Militias : The Warriors of Contemporary Combat*, p. 47 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/material_race, retrieved on 08-03-2009).

5. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_definitions_of_races_in_India, retrieved on 08-03-2009.

6. *Ibid.*

7. Metcalf, Thomas T., *Imperial Connections : India in the Indian Ocean Arena, 1860-1920* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 2007), pp. 70-95.

cheaper in pay than the British could be used to conquer empire for them.⁸ As for as the concept of the Sikhs as a martial race is concerned, the study in historical retrospect is required. It would be useful to perceive the circumstances in which the Sikh people got transformed as martial people. Although Sikhism had originated in the fifteenth century as a monotheistic and pacifist creed under Guru (preceptor, literal meaning teacher) Nanak Dev and the objective of that was to remove the socio-religious evils like caste inequality, rituals and superstitions and to show the right path of *bhakti* (meditation). Thus, the Sikhs originated as a religious community which later became a martial community in reaction to the repressive policies pursued by the tyrant successors of the tolerant Mughal Emperor Akbar.⁹ The fifth Sikh Guru Arjun Dev was executed at Lahore by Jahangir which made sixth Guru Hargobind to leave the policy of peace and confront the Mughals. The Guru wore two swords as a symbol of spiritual as well as temporal authority (*miri* and *piri*). He advised the Sikhs to bring horses, arms and ammunition as gifts in place of the valuable goods. This was the beginning of militarization of the Sikh community. The sixth Guru Hargobind waged four wars against the Mughal rulers and won the all.

The Sikh crusade against the Muslim rulers was epitomized in the last of the ten Gurus, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) after the execution of ninth Sikh Guru, Teg Bahadur. He gave the Sikhs a thorough going military organization and transformed a religious community into a military society to challenge the might of the Mughal Empire. The Guru laid down a baptismal ceremony for all the Sikhs and announced that all the true Sikhs would be his *Khalsa* or pure. The Sikhs were to be initiated into the *Khalsa* by a ceremony of baptism by the double-edged sword (*pahul*).¹⁰ It was mandatory for the Sikhs to possess five Ks—*Kes* (uncut hair), *Kangha* (comb), *Kara* (iron bracelet), *Kachhehra* (underwear) and *Kirpan* (sword). Then the Khalsa Sikhs identified explicitly with a warrior creed and were clearly marked by their outward appearance. All the male members of the order assumed the last name of Singh meant the lion and the females as Kaur. One of the five Sikh emblems is *kirpan* or sword which was the symbol of liberty and Sikhs' commitment to protect the weak and to promote justice.

8. *Ibid.*

9. B.R. Nayer, *Minority Politics in the Punjab* (Princeton, 1966), p. 59.

10. Heather Streets, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

The persecution under the Mughals had led the Sikhs to become ever more involved in the realm of politics and war, for, as one commentator noted, 'the orchard of the Sikh faith needed the thorny hedge of armed man for its protection.'¹¹ Every Sikh was taught to stand against injustice from what ever source and to defend the weak and down-trodden, no matter what their religious affiliation was. Guru Gobind Singh roused the martial spirit among the Sikhs. The Sikhs were advised hunting, wrestling and plasticizing martial arts. The Guru proclaimed that one Singh/Sikh was equal to one hundred twenty thousand other people. He called *Khalsa* the army of Almighty God. The Guru said, "*Je tao prem khelan ka chao, sir dhar tali gali meri aao*" (if you want the love to blossom, you have to come to me with your head in your hands) which means total sacrifice of body and mind. The principal of equality was strictly followed and no caste was given more weight. Any one could become a Sikh and was given the equal consideration at that time. It is apparent in the utterances of the tenth Sikh Guru—"Hindu Turk Raphji Imam Safi, manas ki jaat sabhe ek pahichanho" (The race of all human beings is one whether one is a Hindu, Muslim or of some other religion). The Sikh religion much appealed to the hard working peasantry and they found it relevant to their martial traits. The artisans, labourers and downtrodden people joined it because they were given the equal place in the order.

Over the course of eighteenth century, the political and militaristic outlook of the Sikhs coincided with the weakening of the Mughal Empire and in that period various Sikh chiefs succeeded in establishing territorial principalities in Punjab. The Sikh chiefs founded twelve *Misls* and ruled over different parts of Punjab. During this period the number of the Sikh population was small and that had to face the Mughal power and the Durrani invader Ahmed Shah Abdali simultaneously. Organizing themselves in bands they bravely fought against the invader adopting the *Gurilla* warfare. They attacked the enemies in the midnight when they were slept or in the afternoon when they could not fight because of heat. The Sikhs became the victims of the tyrant invader and were massacred in bulk in March 1752-November 1753¹² but under the leadership of Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia the Sikhs succeeded in occupying Lahore, the capital of

11. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

12. Panth Parkash, p. 708, cited in Ganda Singh, *Sardar Jassa Singh Ahluwalia* (Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala), pp. 78-79.

Note—This statement needs to be elaborated for clarification —ed.

Punjab* in 1760s. This was the evidence of the military strength and the martial spirit of the Sikh community.

In the early nineteenth century, Maharaja Ranjeet Singh who is known as the Lion of the Punjab subdued several other Sikh chiefs and brought the whole North-West of India under his monarchical rule. Ranjit Singh organized a disciplined army of 75000 men, many but not all of whom the Sikhs.¹³ The Sikh armies under the able command of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa and with the help of Sikhs under the leadership of Akali Phoola Singh defeated the Afghans and occupied the area upto Jamroud. The defeat of Afghans by the Sikhs and of the Maratha army by the British accelerated the breakaway of the Punjab from Delhi and helped establishing Sikhs' lordship. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the *Khalsa* army almost controlled the state affairs till the annexation of Punjab by the British. The British faced fierce resistance in this region while easily conquering some others. During 1st Anglo-Sikh War 2000 British troops were killed and in the 2nd Anglo-Sikh War the British met a severe defeat at Chillianwali loosing 3000 dead and three colours of three British regiments, though the Sikhs ultimately were forced to surrender. A renowned Punjabi poet Shah Mohammed in his famous work admires the courage and bravery shown by the Sikhs during the wars.¹⁴ This led the British officials to conclude that the people of these regions were naturally warlike races which possessed qualities such as courage, loyalty, self sufficiency, physical strength, resilience, orderliness and fighting tenacity. Though the Sikhs had been defeated and the area in which they were dominant was annexed by the British, even then the latter were cautious of danger which might have emerged again by the Sikhs. So the Lt. Commissioner of Punjab made sincere efforts not only to bring peace in Punjab but also to win the Sikhs to the British side. His efforts brought the desired fruits.¹⁵

In 1857, a large section of the native army revolted against the British East India Company's rule because of various reasons, one of which was the use of cartridges. The soldiers in the British army were given new Enfield rifles in which the cartridges were smeared with the fat of cows and pigs. These cartridges were to be bitten off before loading in the rifle. This hurt the religious sentiments of Hindu and Muslim soldiers. They

*This statement needs to be elaborated for clarification —ed.

13. Heather Streets, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

14. See, *Jangnama Singhan te Firangiyan*, by Shah Mohammed.

15. See, G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of Punjab*, pp. 330-367.

refused to use the cartridges and revolted against the British. With the first spark of revolt at Barrackpore Cantonment in Bengal, where Mangal Pandey, a soldier of 34 Regiment shot dead the regiment officer. He was caught, prosecuted and hanged. The mutiny spread to Bengal, Bihar, North-Western Province, Delhi, Central Province, Haryana region and Jhansi state. With the progress of revolt the mutineers were joined by common people because of anti-British feelings.

The Sikhs are alleged for not joining their country men and betraying the national cause. But they did not join the rebels because of certain reasons. They had been defeated by the British just eight years before this mega incident. Rather it was because they hated the Bengal army for being the instrument of their defeat during the recent Sikh wars. Also Sikhs were believed to have borne a grudge of centuries against Delhi, as the capital of an empire that had persecuted and murdered the members of the faith. They desired not the rule of the same authority be established.¹⁶

The Sikh loyalty during the Rebellion inspired a basic re-evaluation of their role and importance in the Indian army. Had the Punjab and the Sikhs rebelled against the British in conjunction with the sepoys and peasants of North-Central India, the British rule in the north of India might have been ended in 1857. J. Craufurd, contributor to the professional Military Journal of *Royal United Services Institutes* acknowledged that Sikhs might have remained loyal for self-interested reasons; still he insisted that in recruiting for a new Native Army the first people who should be named are the Sikhs, who have so well served up during the present rebellion.¹⁷ Preference for Sikhs in government services was especially noticeable in military recruitment. Although they were less than two percent of the Indian population, their proportion in the army at times went up to as high as thirty three percent.¹⁸

The British often labeled the Sikhs 'the greatest of the martial races'. The Sikh Regiment is one of the Indian army's most highly decorated infantry regiment which has won many battle honors. After independence the concept of martial races was discarded and the recruitment in the Indian army is made on the basis of population of the states; even then the number of Sikhs remained larger in proportion to their population. With other Indians they contributed much in the Indo-Pak War of 1965 and also in

16. *Ibid.*

17. Cited in Heather Streets, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

18. B.R. Nayar, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

1971 when Lt. General Jagjit Singh Arora compelled the Pakistani Forces to surrender.

Summarizing this paper it may be concluded that the concept of martial races was a construct of the colonial rulers through which they encouraged separate tendencies among various communities in India for their own interests. They divided the Indian people in martial and non-martial groups. Like Rajputs, Jats, Ahirs, Pathans and Gujjars, the Sikhs were also recognized as a martial race. But one thing is noteworthy that the Sikhs though originated as a peaceful religious community got transformed into a martial community in reaction to the atrocities and repressive policies of the Mughal rulers. They were mercilessly tortured but never bent before the enemies. They reflected their martial spirit during the struggle against the rulers and invaders. Even today the heroic literature is much attractive to the Sikh masses and the *dhadis* (singers, singing the heroic poems in an indigenous style). Because of their non-participation in the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and the help they rendered to the British crushing the revolt, they were given preferred place in the army in comparison with other Indian subjects.

MARTIAL SPIRIT AND THE SIKHS

Gurbinder Kaur*

Martial means to be brave, warlike, valient and the martial spirit has been synonymous with Sikh religion. This spirit could be seen in Guru Nanak who dared to raise a voice against the tyrannical and ruthless beings and ministers of his time :

The rajas are lions and the muqaddams dogs; they fell upon (the ra'iyet) day and night; their agents inflict wounds with claws (of power) and the dogs lick blood and relish the liver.¹

But if we have to find the origin of martiality in Sikh tradition then it was definitely very clear in the mind of Guru Arjan who used military metaphor throughout his writings. He is also the first martyr of Sikh history and gave military training to his son and successor, Hargobind.**

Guru Hargobind displayed martial spirit in his thought as well as living. His wearing of two swords of *miri* and *piri* can be vouched for that. He regularly kept his army who was given military training and himself fought wars with the Mughals. The doctrine of *miri* and *piri*, infused new spirit among the Sikhs. They became soldier-saints or noble-warriors whom no unjust ruler or order could frighten into submission.²

The new Sikh psyche, generated by the supreme sacrifice of Guru Arjan Dev and fostered by Guru Hargobind and the consequent marshalling of men and material brought the rising Sikh power into armed clashes with the Mughals during the reign of Shah Jahan. The transformation of Sikh society into brotherhood of soldier saints was because of the cumulative impact of the teachings and lives of the Gurus, the experience of the community and the sociological interaction between different elements of society exposed to the

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1. J.S. Grewal, *Sikh Ideology, Polity And Social Order* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 1996), p. 6.

** There is divergence of opinion on this point. No contemporary evidence is available to prove that Guru Arjan provided military training to his son and successor, Guru Hargobind Sahib —(ed.).

2. H.L. Agnihotri and Chand R. Agnihotri, *Guru Hargobind Ji – His Life and Times* (Hisar, Gopal Prakashan, 1995), p. 65.

brutality and intolerance of the Mughal rulers backed by their fanatic theologians. Sikhism gave identity and status to the socially deprived segments of society and also attracted the bold peasantry especially the Jats into its fold. The reaction to the Guru's martyrdom took a militant turn, though the limited militarism espoused by Guru Hargobind was, in essence, of a defensive character.³

Guru Hargobind's son Guru Teg Bahadur was himself a great warrior which he proved in the battle of Phagwara. It was his martial spirit which had made Guru Hargobind to remark that Tegg Mal seemed a more appropriate name than Tiag Mal.⁴

Guru Teg Bahadur's sacrifice of his own life took level of martiality to its heights. His martyrdom for the cause of Hindus exalted him in the history as one of the greatest and fearless men. It was left to his son Guru Gobind Singh to give a distinct identity and sense of immortality to the Sikhs by laying the foundation of the *Khalsa*. Revolutionary changes in social, political or economic systems can rarely be brought about without using force and power.

The great apostle and martyr Bhai Mani Singh, who lived with Guru Gobind Singh throughout the Guru's life and is remembered as the greatest theologian and missionary apostle of his times interprets the use of two-edged sword as the symbol of heroic spirit and inspiration (*vir rasa*) i.e. the spirit of dying for righteousness and freedom.⁵

Also there was the power of *masands* which was to be finished. Frequent warnings were issued to the Sikhs by Guru Gobind Singh to always avoid dealing with the *masands* or their followers which are clear from their *hukumnamas*. According to one version *masand* system was initially set up by the fourth Guru, Ram Das, building upon the *manji* system introduced by his predecessor, Guru Amar Das. The system apparently worked satisfactorily for the greater part of century, but by the time Gobind Singh assumed his role as Guru in 1675 many *masands* had become corrupt, exercising their independent authority and retaining donations for their own use. Abolition of the *masand* system was, therefore, a prime objective of Guru Gobind Singh in what is known as the foundation of the *Khalsa*. On 6th February, 1702 Guru Gobind Singh sent a *hukumnama* to the *sangat* of Pirag wherein the *sangat*

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-96.

4. Gurbachan Singh Nayyar, *The Sikhs In Ferment* (New Delhi: National Book Organization, 1992), p. 56.

5. Trilochan Singh, *The Turban And The Sword of The Sikhs* (Amritsar: B. Chatter Singh Jiwan Singh, 1977, 2nd ed., 2001), p. 132.

was expressly warned to have nothing to do with the *masands*. He also gave an injunction to the *sangat* to come to him by arming themselves.⁶

The Gurus always wanted to bring about reforms in the society. This was the purpose of Guru Gobind Singh when he founded the *Khalsa* to help the degraded and despised sections of the society to work out their own destiny. Guru Gobind Singh's army mainly consisted of these men. After Guru Gobind Singh's death, the Sikhs were led by Banda Bahadur and his forces were recruited chiefly from the lower caste Hindus and scavengers, leather dressers and such like persons. Besides the heroes who sacrificed their lives in the battles of Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh, the first Sikh martyrs who silently and courageously suffered death by extreme tortures like Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Dila and the *panj piaras* were inspired by evidently the same spirit i.e. unflinching faith in the Guru, his mission and the religion. With the creation of the *Khalsa* and the progress of its armed struggle, the ideological objectives and implications of the revolutionary movement becomes clearly defined. It became clear that the Sikh movement aimed at not only fighting religious and political diction but also at capturing political power. This aspect of the movement grew to be its dominant feature and conquests of Banda Bahadur proved this feature.⁷ The bravery of Banda Bahadur and his forces is renowned. With the execution of Banda Bahadur in 1716 started one of the most difficult period in the History of Sikhs. The Sikhs, who were now without a personal leader, started the tradition of deciding matters concerning the community at the biennial meetings at Amritsar. The focal point shifted from Punjab to Delhi where Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Kaur lived. The *Sehajdhari*s settled down to peaceful trades and the *Khalsa*, who remained in plains was divided into *Bandai* and *Tat Khalsa* groups. In c. 1721, Bhai Mani Singh resolved the issue and once the internal squabbles were settled, the Sikh forces or the *Tat Khalsa* became a real power. Under its instructions *jathedars* formed small bands and began taking villages under their protection. It is in this scenario that leaders like Nawab Kapur Singh, came in the forefront. Formation of independent *Jathas* who were combined under *Dal Khalsa* became central fighting force. It was billeted at Amritsar consisting of two divisions, the *Buddha Dal* and *Taruna Dal*.⁸

6. W.H. McLeod, *Sikhs of the Khalsa* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 35-38.
7. Jagjit Singh, *The Sikh Revolution* (New Delhi : Bahri Publication Pvt. Ltd., 1981), pp. 192-193.
8. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs 1469-1839* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1963), Vol.I, pp. 121-123.

Execution of pious & venerable head priest Bhai Mani Singh in 1738 caused deep resentment among the Sikhs. But before they could retaliate, the situation changed with dramatic suddenness with the news of Persian invasion of Nadir Shah in 1738-1739. It were only the Sikhs who never bowed before Nadir Shah and did everything to liberate Indian prisoners. Zakariya Khan, the Mughal governor who had submitted before the invader showed great alacrity in crushing the Sikhs who suffered terrible hardships during his time. It was only a spirit of bravado which enabled the Sikhs to face adversity. After the death of Zakariya Khan in 1745, his son Yahya Khan became governor of Punjab. Now small *jatthas* were made into 25 sizeable regiments of cavalry with Nawab Kapur Singh as overall commander. The commanders of some of these regiments namely Hari Singh Bhangi, Naudh Singh of Sukerchak, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Jai Singh Kanahiya etc. played a decisive role in liberating the Punjab from the Mughals and foreign invaders. It is during this time i.e. 1746 that *chotta ghallughara* took place.⁹ In 1747-1748 came the 1st Afghan invasion under Ahmad Shah Abdali. The invasions, however, continued till 1769. The Great Holocaust took place in 1762 in which nearly 40,000 Sikhs perished. However, opinions differ with regard to the Sikhs killed.

Despite this disaster the Sikhs had regained enough confidence to celebrate Diwali at Amritsar. Abdali's nominees were restricted to their encampments. With the death of Abdali in 1772, and Marathas busy in consolidating their hold on Delhi, the territory between the Indus and Jumna was left to the Sikhs. They immediately set about conquering and dividing it among themselves as *misals*. In the words of A.C. Banerjee "it was the war of independence which brought out the internal strength of the community. Sikh democracy was put to severe test and it was not found wanting. The community not only survived half a century of persecution but, it created a State."

This State was founded by Ranjit Singh with his first major conquest of Lahore in 1799 and subsequent win at Amritsar in 1803. From Amritsar, Ranjit Singh got the services of Akalis – a group thoroughly ingrained in the concept of martial spirit of Guru Gobind Singh. It was the martial spirit of Akalies like Akali Poohla Singh and Akali Sadhu Singh that Ranjit Singh won his toughest battles. One major challenge that he faced was of channelising martial spirit of these great warriors. The military genius¹⁰ of Ranjit Singh lies

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 123-129.

10. Lepel. H. Griffin, *The Punjab Chiefs* (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1890), p. 138.

in his firm grasp of the challenge of his time and in the undoubted success of his practical measures undertaken to meet it.

But while Ranjit Singh wanted to adopt European methods he could not completely leave the system of warfare which he inherited. Being well known for its skirmishing and maneuvering ability, dash and gallantry, the inherited system could be of great service to him. Also, Sikhs always remained apprehensive of the change especially in the beginning under the Europeans. He could also accommodate high class troops of the Sikh chieftains who were endowed with similar martial spirit.¹¹ It goes to Ranjit Singh's credit that he could give a direction to his vast and powerful army by winning new areas as also keeping them preoccupied.

After Ranjit Singh the control over the army started slacking. It was from September, 1843 onwards that army, conscious of its importance, began to assume a political role by presenting 8 demands to Raja Hira Singh which were all political in nature. Hence forward, it styled itself as the *Khalsa ji* and behaved as if it were an institution superior to the state.¹² It is in this chaotic time that *panchayats* of soldiers sprang up to get their legitimate demands fulfilled as well as to enforce discipline which otherwise would have proved ruinous. It definitely proved ruinous because the powerful *panchayats* though boosted the morale of the army, actually scared the rulers and ultimately, paved way for the 1st Anglo – Sikh war in 1845-46. Even though the *Khalsa* army lost the war yet their spirit of bravery, and personal valour amazed the enemy and received praise even from the Europeans. As J.D. Cunningham puts it, "it was due to the sinister motives of the people at the helm of affairs who were more interested in the destruction than in the victory of their army".¹³ It was now that the process of demilitarization was started in Punjab under the watchful eyes of Britishers. Now several troops were disbanded by alleging them to be mutinous troops and arms were taken from them. Moreover, regular army of the Lahore State was drastically reduced. All this roused contempt in the minds of people and Sikh army made an all out attempt in 1848-49 in the second Anglo-Sikh War to throw off the foreign yoke. But the great fighting force was ultimately defeated and Punjab was annexed by the East India

11. Fauja Singh Bajwa, *Military System of the Sikhs* (Varanasi: Motilal Banarasi Das), pp. 35-36.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

13. J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs* (Amritsar: Satvic Media Pvt. Ltd., Re-print 2005), p. 257.

Company. It's Board of Administration first demilitarized¹⁴ the Sikh nation and then at a later stage started recruiting Sikh people. This policy of Britishers was extremely successful as when rest of Northern India rebelled against the Imperial Government in 1857, the Sikh forces sided with the Britishers. What an irony that the martial spirit and the traditions of the Sikhs were used to protect the same British Empire which was responsible for the extinction of their own Sikh Empire.

14. Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 83.

THE LUBANA SIKHS AS A MARTIAL COMMUNITY OF THE PUNJAB (1947-2001)

Kamaljit Singh*

Martial people possess the qualities of courage, bravery, valour, chivalry, endurance, spirit of adventure and sacrifice.¹ They are fond of fighting and are associated with war.² They are proud of their past and are inclined to be boastful of their achievements.³ They are men of high spirit and are always ready to fight against tyranny, injustice and oppression. They take every task and problem as a challenge and fully try to overcome it. They lead a life of honour and respect.

The Lubanas embraced Sikhism at the time of Guru Nanak Dev.⁴ They rendered very valuable services to Sikhism at the time of Sikh Gurus. In 1664 A.D., Baba Makhan Shah Lubana took an initiative to identify and proclaim Guru Tegh Bahadur, the successor of Guru Harkrishan.⁵ In 1675 A.D., Baba Lakhi Shah Lubana did an act of great bravery and risk to carry and cremate the headless body of Guru Tegh Bahadur by setting fire to his house at Rakab Ganj in Delhi.⁶ Besides, after the battle of Bhangani in 1688 A.D. Guru Gobind Singh along with his victorious army stayed for a few days at Nadha Sahib. There a Lubana Sikh Nadha Shah served the Guru and his disciples with full devotion.⁷ A good number of the Lubanas joined the army of Banda Bahadur.⁸ They also served in the army of Maharaja Ranjit

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1. M.S. Randhawa, *Out of Ashes*, Bombay, 1954, p. 61; A.S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary English*, London, 1974 (reprint-first published in 1948), p. 521 and *India's Highest Gallantry Awards and the Men Who Won Them 1947-1995*, The Defence Review, New Delhi, p. 761.
2. *Revised and Updated Illustrated Oxford Dictionary*, New York, 1998, p. 500 and A.S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary English*, p. 521.
3. M.S. Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 48.
4. Kahan Singh, *Guru Shabad Ratnakar : Mahan Kosh*, Patiala, 1960 (reprint), p. 949.
5. Bhai Santokh Singh, *Gur Partap Suraj Granth*, Vol. X, Amritsar, 1955 (3rd ed.), p. 4006.
6. *Gurudwara Gazette*, November 1975, p. 36.
7. Iron Tablet in Gurudwara Nadha Sahib.
8. ਪਹਿਲੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਨਜਾਰੇ ਰਲੇ। ਫੜ ਹਥ ਬਰਛੇ ਬੈਲ ਲਦ ਭਲੇ
ਮਾਲਵੇ ਉਹਾ ਥਾ ਨੇੜੇ ਦੇਸ਼। ਉਇ ਭੀ ਮਿਲੇ ਹੁਇ ਬੰਦੇ ਪੇਸ਼॥

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Singh.⁹ A considerable portion of the Lubana community was serving in the British army and armies of native states. A number of factors were responsible for their inclination towards military service.

Originally, they were roving traders with large caravans which were often used for transportation by the traders and rulers.¹⁰ They were great suppliers of carriage and Indian armies from the time of the Mughals to that of General Lake and Lord Wellesley were largely dependent upon them for supplies and transport.¹¹ They encamped with regularity and never lodged in houses. They were very strongly armed and ready to fight for protection of their goods from robbers and dacoits.¹² Thus, they were familiar with the use of weapons and were expert in fighting. Such type of training facilitated their recruitment in the army. Besides, they led a very hard and tough life which made them fit for all hardships of life.

Later on, due to disintegration of the Mughal empire and foreign invasions, anarchy, confusion and disorder prevailed in the Punjab. It became difficult for the Lubanas to carry on their traditional occupation. Compelled by circumstances, they settled on the banks of rivers and followed pastoral pursuits.¹³ With the passage of time, they entered in the agrarian hierarchy and became owner of land. They were recognized as agriculturists by British government.¹⁴

The size of their holdings was small. It could not provide them sufficient sources of livelihood. So, they had to look for some additional sources of income.¹⁵ Physically, they were well built people.¹⁶ They were the residents of rural areas. Besides, formerly, they were Rajput, but

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Rattan Singh Bhangu, *Prachin Panth Parkash* (ed. Bhai Sahib Vir Singh), Sri Amritsar, 1982 (5th ed.), p. 87.

9. Balwinder Singh Grewal, *Forgotten Sikh Tribes*, New York, n.d., p. 16.

10. Romila Thapar, *A History of India*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1990 (First-Published 1966), p. 265.

11. A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, Delhi, 1985 (reprint-first published in 1899), p. 51.

12. Sir Wellesley Haig, *The Cambridge History of India : Turks and Afghans*, Vol. III, 1928, p. 243 and J.H. Hutton, *Caste in India*, London, 1969 (reprint), p. 90.

13. Indu Banga, "State Formation under the Sikh Rule", *Journal of Regional History*, Vol. I. p. 87.

14. Pandit Hari Krishan Kaul, *Report of the Census of India*, Civil and Military Gazette Press, Lahore, 1912, Vol. XIV, Part II, p. 428.

15. Their only weakness is their small size of holdings. Nur Mohammad, *Assessment Report on the Ex-Sharapur portion of the Shahdera Tehsil of Sheikhpura District*, p. 10.

16. Harinder Singh, *Nangal Lubana (1956-88) : Study of Socio-Economic Change*, M.Phil. Dissertation, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, 1990, p. 18.

betaking themselves to commerce, had fallen into the third class.¹⁷ So, they showed inclination mainly towards military service. They felt pride in their military service.¹⁸

The Lubanas very positively responded to the war efforts of the British Government during the First World War.¹⁹ Upholding the martial traditions of their faith the Sikh Lubanas had cheerfully yielded up their manhood in the empire's cause. A very high percentage of their eligible boys joined the army.²⁰ There were many distinguished families and villages which sent all their eligible boys to the war.²¹ Their maximum recruitment in the army and their remarkable contribution was appreciated by Sir Michael O' Dwyer, Lieutenant Governor of Punjab in his war speeches.²²

Their services were recognized by British Government in a variety of ways. The best of them had been granted memorial marble tablets which should keep alive for all time the memory of those who fought and fell.²³

They also contributed a lot in the Second World War. A good number of them joined Indian National Army.²⁴ They fought against the British army. Many of them sacrificed their lives to free their motherland from the British rule.²⁵

The partition of the Punjab was a very important event in the history of Punjab. It had great impact on the Lubana community. A majority of the Lubanas were living in the West Punjab. They were mainly Sikhs. So, they had to migrate to east Punjab.²⁶ They had to face many difficulties. At that

17. James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1971, p. 258.

18. Service in the army is popular and every Lubana village boasts of its military service active or retired. Nur Mohammad, *Assessment Report on the Ex-Sharapur Portion of the Shahdera Tehsil of Sheikhpura District*, p. 10.

19. M.S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, Punjab Government Printing, Lahore, 1922, p. 48.

20. *War Speeches of His Honour Sir Michael O' Dwyer, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab*, Punjab Government Printing, Lahore, 1919, p. 79.

21. M.S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, pp. 115, 117.

22. *War Speeches of His Honour Sir Michael O' Dwyer, Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab*, pp. 56, 59, 79, 136.

23. M.S. Leigh, *The Punjab and the War*, p. 117.

24. "Lubana Sikhian Di Bharti is Parkar Hai", *Prem Sandesh*, Weekly, Vol. 7, No. 2, May 9, 1945, p. 11.

25. *Kapurthala Sutantarta Sangramiye*, Published by Red Cross Society, Kapurthala, n.d., pp. 73-78 and *Azad Hind Fauj De Swatantarta Sangramiye District Hoshiarpur*, n.d., n.p., pp. 107, 110, 111, 119, 130.

26. L. Middleton and S.M. Jacobs, *Report on the Census of India 1921*, Lahore, 1922, Vol. XV, Part-II, p. 231.

time, their leadership tried to settle them homogeneously.²⁷ Due to their efforts, the Lubana community which was mainly displaced from the West Punjab settled homogeneously in the rural areas on the banks of rivers in the east Punjab. Their main concentration was in the Bholath tehsil of Kapurthala state and its adjoining area of Dasuya tehsil of Hoshiarpur district.²⁸ That area was surrounded by the local Lubanas. It provided a sense of security, confidence, unity and co-ordination to the widely scattered community. It facilitated the works of development for them. Thus, the partition of the Punjab proved a push factor and disguised blessing for them.²⁹

As farmers, they proved their worth. They were capable of sustained physical labour.³⁰ By application of farmyard manure and artificial means of irrigation, they converted the hard *kallar* soil into fertile *chahi*. They also brought vast *bet* and *banjar* areas under cultivation. The areas between river Beas and Black Bein were riverain areas with series of *chhamb*s and marshes. Flood was an annual feature. The marshes were flooded in June or July and remained under water until September.³¹ Thus, the area was fit for the cultivation of paddy. The Lubanas were very expert in its cultivation. They produced best type of paddy. So, that area became a rice bowl.³² In this way, they contributed a lot to the economy of the Punjab.

The anti-flood measures were taken by the government by raising Dhusi Bandh near the bank of river Beas. The floods were checked. The Lubanas produced two crops annually. The production of paddy and wheat increased more under the impact of green revolution.³³

27. He (Sant Prem Singh) belonged to Gujrat district and served the refugees wholeheartedly. *Punjab Vidhan Sabha Debates*, Speech of Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava (Chief Minister) on 28th February, 1951.

28. Tarlok Singh, *Land Resettlement Manual for Displaced Persons in Punjab and Pepsu*, Punjab Government, 1952, p. 98.

29. *The Tribune*, 18-9-1983, p. 3.

30. M.S. Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 61.

31. R.K. Anand (ed.), *Census of India 1961 : Punjab : District Census Hand Book No. 15, Kapurthala District*, Punjab Government Press, 1967, p. 3; *District Gazetteer Hoshiarpur*, 1980, p. 112.

32. S.P. Brar, *Kapurthala Directory*, Brar Publicity Bureau, Shalimar Road, Kapurthala, 1974, p. 45.

33. *Dhusi Band* has been constructed on the left bank of river Beas to prevent floods. R.L. Anand, *Census of India 1961 : Punjab : District Census Hand Book No. 15, Kapurthala District*, pp. 3, 11.

The Sikh Lubanas were mainly serving in the army. Due to partition of the Punjab, their resettlement, scheme of graded cut during allotment and allotment of unfertile land increased their economic difficulties.³⁴ So, their dependence on military service increased. Due to strong military background, most of their young boys joined army. Besides, most of the Lubana families had ex-servicemen.³⁵ They also inspired the young boys to join army. Moreover, their periodical "*Lubana Sewak*" (monthly) which was started in September 1954 advertised the dates and places of recruitment.³⁶ Besides, "Lubana Sewak Sabha" which was their important association passed many resolutions for maximum recruitment of the Lubanas in the army.³⁷ Consequently, all their settlements became the nurseries for their military service.³⁸ In their literature, they desired for higher ranks in the army and inspired them to make sacrifice for the country.³⁹

The Lubana Sikhs were imbued with a spirit of martial ardour. They possessed great courage and endurance.⁴⁰ Characterized by simplicity, hardiness, love for adventure, the Lubana Sikhs were well known for their

34. The scheme of graded cuts was a harsh and cruel measure. *The Tribune*, 18-9-1983, p. 3 and *District and State Gazetteer of the Undivided Punjab* (prior to independence), p. 564 and *Manual of Reservation for Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes in Services*, Government of Punjab, Department of Welfare (reservation cell), Chandigarh, 1995, p. 15.

35. Harinder Singh, *Nangal Lubana 1956-88 : Study of Socio-Economic Change*, p. 17.

36. ਫੌਜੀ ਭਰਤੀ ਇਸ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਵਿਚ 23 ਜੁਲਾਈ ਸੋਮਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਪਿੰਡ ਨਡਾਲਾ, ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਕਪੂਰਥਲਾ ਵਿਚ 9 ਵਜੇ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ : "Suchnawan" *Lubana Sewak*, July 1956, p. 28.

37. Monthly Meeting of Lubana Sewak Sabha was arranged in Nagar Amar Singh Dian Taprian, Tehsil Ropar, District Ambala on 22nd and 23rd June, 1956. ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਗੁਰਮਤੇ ਸਰਬ ਸੰਮਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਪੇਸ਼ ਹੋਏ :

ਮਤਾ ਨੰਬਰ 6. ਇਸ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੁਹਣੇ ਜਵਾਨ ਹਨ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫੌਜ ਵਿਚ ਭਰਤੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ: Major Sharam Singh, "Vichhrhe Vir Mile" *Lubana Sewak*, June, 1956.

38. S.P. Brar, *Kapurthala Directory*, p. 3.

39. ਹੁਣ ਫੌਜ ਅੰਦਰ ਕਪਤਾਨ ਤੇ ਮੇਜਰ, ਬਣੇ ਕਈ ਕਰਨੈਲ ਤੱਕਾਂਗਾ।

ਏਥੇ ਬੱਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਕੇ, ਫੌਜਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਤੱਕਾਂਗਾ।

ਰਣ ਭੂਮੀ ਵਿਚ ਲੜ ਕੇ ਯੋਧੇ, ਦੇਸ ਲਈ ਹੋਂਦੇ ਘੋਲ ਤੱਕਾਂਗਾ।

S. Sardar Singh Dardi, "Kaum De Naujawan", *Lubana Sewak*, February 1955, Vol. 1, No. 5, p. 18.

40. A.H. Bingley, *The Sikhs*, National Book Shop, Chandni Chowk, Delhi, 1985 (reprint-first published in 1889), pp. 51-52.

The Lobanas which is an important martial tribe in the Punjab considered him (Sant Prem Singh) as their spiritual and temporal leader. *Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates*, Speech of Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava (Chief Minister) on 28th February, 1951.

valour and chivalry. On account of these qualities, they had proved themselves as valuable soldiers in the Indian army and distinguished themselves in many battlefields.⁴¹

In October 1962, there was a war between India and China. The Lubanas displayed gallantry, determination and devotion to duty on the border of Nefa and Ladakh. Many of them sacrificed their lives.⁴² Their valuable services were recognized by the Punjab government. S. Partap Singh Kairon, the Chief Minister of the Punjab laid the foundation stone of war memorial in Nangal Lubana in Kapurthala on 23rd March 1964.⁴³ Besides, they were also honoured with different military awards.⁴⁴

They distinguished themselves in the Indo-Pak War of 1965. Lt. Col. Gurcharan Singh commanded three platoons in Kashmir and occupied the 25 square miles area of Pakistan.⁴⁵ They sacrificed their lives for their Motherland.⁴⁶ They showed bravery in the war and were honoured with *Sena* Medals and mention-in-despatches.⁴⁷

They showed courage and bravery in Indo-Pak War of 1971. They laid down their lives for their country.⁴⁸ They were also honoured with various awards like *Sena* Medals, Mention-in-Despatches and Vashist Sewa Medals.⁴⁹

They also took part in the campaigns of Sri Lanka in 1989 and Kargil in 1999. They displayed gallantry, determination and devotion to duty. Naik

41. M.S. Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes*, p. 61.

42. Inscription, Government Senior Secondary School, Nangal Lubana, Tehsil Bholath, District Kapurthala. List in the District Sainik Welfare Office, Hoshiarpur, pp. 1-9.

43. ਨੇਡਾ ਤੇ ਲਦਾਖ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਦਾ ਨੀਂਹ ਪੱਥਰ ਸ੍ਰ. ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੈਰੋਂ, ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਨੇ ਨੰਗਲ ਲੁਬਾਣਾ ਵਿਖੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਵਿਤ੍ਰ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਨਾਲ 23.3.64 ਨੂੰ ਰੱਖਿਆ। ਸ਼ਹੀਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ : ਨਾਇਕ ਸਾਧੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੰਗਲ ਲੁਬਾਣਾ, ਸਪਾਹੀ ਬਿਕਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੰਗਲ ਲੁਬਾਣਾ, ਸਪਾਹੀ ਜੋਗਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਿਆਨੀ ਭੱਗੂਪੁਰੀਆਂ, ਸਪਾਹੀ ਮਹਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਇਬਰਾਹੀਮਵਾਲ, ਲੈਸ ਨਾਇਕ ਮਹਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਕੂਵਾਲ
Inscription, Government Senior Secondary School, Nangal Lubana, Tehsil Bholath, District Kapurthala.

44. List of Gallantry Awardees of District Kapurthala in Indo-China War, District Sainik Welfare Office, Kapurthala, pp. 1-6.

45. List in the District Sainik Welfare Office, Hoshiarpur, pp. 1-7.

46. Gurcharan Singh, *Jiwani Sant Prem Singh Ji* (Murala), Jaslok Printing Press, Kapurthala, 1988, p. 124.

47. List of Awardees of District Kapurthala in Indo-Pak War 1965, District Sainik Welfare Office, Kapurthala, pp. 1-6.

48. List in the District Sainik Welfare Office, Hoshiarpur, pp. 1-8; Jalandhar, pp. 1-6.

49. List of Gallantry Awardees of District Kapurthala, District Sainik Welfare Office, Kapurthala, pp. 1-6; Zila Sainik Board Hoshiarpur Military, Gallantry/Distinguished Defence/Civilian Award Records Register, p.54.

Sukhdev Singh, No.13746410 of a para-commando, displayed conspicuous courage, bravery and valour in action against the militants. He was rocket launcher number one of 1 Troop Alfa Team in Sri Lanka. On 4 March, 1989 the team faced a strong militant camp of approximately 150 strength. Under heavy fire, Naik Sukhdev Singh deployed his rocket launcher. He was injured by a claymore mine, but continued to fire his rocket launcher, warding off determined efforts by the militants to assault and encircle the team. He continued to fire for nearly 90 minutes, till he was seriously hit in the head and was evacuated. He later succumbed to the injuries on 13 March 1989. So, he was honoured with Vir Chakar Posthumously.⁵⁰ Many Lubanas sacrificed their lives in Sri Lanka and Kargil.⁵¹

As the pressure on land increased, taking the advantage of openings abroad, mobile persons among them migrated to Germany, England, USA and Canada in good numbers. They worked hard and saved a lot of money. They boosted the financial position of the Lubana community. Their emigration brought a significant change in the social, economic and political status of the community. Their small houses were replaced by the splendid buildings having two or three storeys. Lubana villages where donkey used to bray at dawn were then humming with the horns of the vehicles.⁵² They utilized the foreign currency to purchase land and tractors.⁵³

The Lubanas were fond of martial art. They were very fond of *bhangra*. They were very expert in it. They continued to dance till late hours in the night without showing any signs of fatigue and exhaustion.⁵⁴ Sarvshri Joginder Singh and Phuman Singh functioned as *bhangra* artists for the Cultural Troupes Camp-ASIAD-1982 at Delhi.⁵⁵ Kabaddi was their favourite game. They produced many players of national and international levels. S. Balwinder Singh Fidda was declared Rustem-e-Kabaddi, and was declared the best sportsperson of 1999 in Kabaddi. So, he was honoured

50. *India's Highest Gallantry Awards and the Men who won them 1947-1995*, p. 761.

51. List in the District Sainik Welfare Office, Jalandhar, p. 5;
District Sainik Welfare Office, Kapurthala, p. 4.

52. Letter No. SPSLWs/Jalandhar 98 dated 02-09-1998 of Dr. (Brig.) Daljitam Singh, President, Sant Prem Singh Lubana Welfare Society, Jalandhar, p. 2.

53. Harinder Singh, *Nangal Lubana (1956-88) : Study of Socio-Economic Change*, p. 51.

54. Bhangra is a dance of vigorous people, which is marked with exuberance of spirits and display of elemental energy, M.S. Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes*, pp. 60, 199.

55. Appreciation Certificates of Cultural Troupes Camp-Asiad-1982, Delhi, issued by Maj. General, Director General, National Cadet Corps.

with Arjuna Award on 29th August 2000.⁵⁶ Kabaddi was the best game of their entertainment. There were matches of Kabaddi at all fairs and festivals.⁵⁷

To sum up, we may say that the Lubana Sikhs rendered very valuable services to Sikhism. They were imbued with a spirit of martial ardour. They possessed the qualities of courage, bravery and endurance and spirit of adventure. They distinguished themselves in the Indo-China War of 1962 and Indo-Pak Wars of 1965 and 1971. They displayed gallantry, determination and devotion to duty in the campaigns of Sri Lanka in 1989 and Kargil in 1999. As farmers, they were capable of sustained physical labour. They brought vast *bet* and *banjar* areas under cultivation. As the pressure on land increased, taking the advantage of openings abroad, mobile persons among migrated to other countries. They worked hard and saved a lot of money. They boosted the financial position of Lubana community. In their cultural life folk dance *Bhangra* and Kabaddi has been of prime importance.

56. Arjuna Award – 1999 Awarded To Shri Balwinder Singh For Kabaddi, Govt. of India Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

57. R.L. Anand (ed.), *Census of India 1961*, Vol. XIII, Part II-A, p. 88.

SECULAR TRADITIONS IN THE KAPURTHALA STATE

Anju Suri nee Anju Arora*

The word 'secular' literally means 'pertaining to the present world', or to 'things not spiritual'; 'civil, not ecclesiastical'; 'not concerned with religion'.¹ According to the western concept, secularism is 'any movement in society directed away from otherworldliness to life on earth';² it stands for absolute segregation between religion and the state. But in India, where religious traditions have invariably been dominant characteristics of the society, secularism has a different connotation; it implies that there should be no state religion and that the state should treat all the religions equally;³ it should neither favour any particular religion nor disfavour others. It is in this connotation of secularism that this paper seeks to examine the secular traditions in the Kapurthala state.

Jassa Singh Ahluwalia (1718-1783), the founder of the Kapurthala state, was a deeply religious-minded person from his very childhood. While a child of five years he had been entrusted to the care of Guru Gobind Singh's widow, *Mata Sundari* by his mother. But two years after, *Mata Sundari* allowed Jassa Singh and his mother to go to the house of Bagh Singh, his maternal uncle. Not long after Jassa Singh was entrusted to the care of Kapur Singh Faizalpuria, and the young boy was baptised by the latter.⁴ Thus Jassa Singh grew into manhood a devoted *amritdhari* Sikh. It is said that the Sikhs considered it a privilege to take baptism of double-edged sword at Jassa Singh's hands.⁵ Though a devout Sikh, Jassa Singh was an enlightened and liberal-minded ruler who followed the policy of 'utmost religious toleration'. He had employed

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1. *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*, Bombay, 1972, p. 1224.
2. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 10, Micropaedia, 15th edition, London, 2002, p.594.
3. A.C. Arora, 'Secular Policy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh' in *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XXII-I April, 1988, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 150.
4. Bhagat Singh, *A History of the Sikh Misals*, Patiala, 1993, pp. 57-59.
5. Raja Amar Singh of Patiala was one of the many prominent Sikhs who had been administered *pahul* by Jassa Singh. See Ramjas, *Tarikh-i-Riyast Kapurthala*, Lahore, 1897, Vol. I, p. 150; Lepel Griffin, *The Rajas of the Punjab* (Reprint), Patiala, 1970, p. 468.

a large number of Muslims in his service and they were allowed to follow their own religious practices without any restriction. In his behaviour he was never prejudiced against the Muslims; rather his attitude towards them was praise-worthy.⁶ In order to respect the religious sentiments of the Hindus and the Sikhs, he had, however, strictly prohibited the slaughter of cows, and had even undertaken expeditions against the cow-killers of Kasur and Lahore.⁷ Thus, the founder of the Kapurthala State also laid the foundation of secular traditions in the state.

The successor of Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Bhag Singh (1783-1801) was also a religious-minded person having liberal outlook. Though a follower of Sikhism, he evinced great reverence for the Hindu deities. He got excavated at Kapurthala a *Devi Tank*, and a *Devi-Dwara* was also got repaired by him. He gave liberal alms to the Brahmans and the *pujaris*. It is said that all the new *Sadhus* entering Kapurthala were entertained sumptuously by him.⁸

Like his predecessors, Fateh Singh (1801-1837) was also a devoted Sikh who was very particular about the performance of his *nit-nam* (daily prayers) but like them, too, he had a liberal outlook in respect of other religions. He not only visited the holy places of the Sikhs but also those of the Hindus and gave liberal *jagirs* to them. He did not fail to patronise the Muslim institutions also. He had a good knowledge of Punjabi language and is said to have composed Punjabi verses in the traditional style. At the same time he had acquired a workable knowledge of Persian language from a Persian teacher.⁹

The successors of Fateh Singh continued to follow liberal and tolerant religious policy. But it was during the reign of Jagatjit Singh (1877-1948) that the secular traditions reached their full fruition. To be sure, when Jagatjit Singh ascended the throne in 1877 he was a minor of only five years, and the administration of the state during his minority, as decided by the British authorities, was conducted by six successive British Superintendents, named C.M. Rivaz, Mackworth Young, Fredrick Fryer, F.D. Cunningham, Denzil Ibbetson and Major C.F. Massy. Apart from introducing reforms in various departments of administration, suitable arrangements were made for the education of the minor Chief. Competent tutors, both Indian and English, were appointed for his education. The precocious lad picked up a good knowledge of English and French languages in addition to that of Urdu, Persian,

6. W.L. M'Gregor, *The History of the Sikhs*, London, 1846, Vol. I, p. 147.

7. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

8. Ramjas, *op. cit.*, pp. 329, 342-44.

9. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

Sanskrit, Hindi and Gurmukhi. Thus he developed into a highly enlightened Chief with liberal outlook. His frequent visits to foreign countries subsequently, further widened his outlook.

After Jagatjit Singh assumed all the powers of administration in his own hands he deliberately followed secular policy. He was above communal prejudices and he gave full religious freedom to the people of all the three communities - Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus. He could not be oblivious of the fact that 56 per cent population of the state was that of the Muslims whereas the Hindus and the Sikhs constituted 20 per cent and 24 per cent respectively of the total population.

Being a descendant of Jassa Singh, an *amritdhari* Sikh, Jagatjit Singh had a firm faith in *Guru Granth Sahib* and *gurdwaras*. He had got constructed a beautiful *Gurdwara* at Kapurthala which was opened by the Maharaja in February 1916 with stately ceremonial; the marble dome of the *Gurdwara*, however, took some time and it was completed in 1918.¹⁰ A big *Gurdwara* was also built at Sultanpur.¹¹ The place was sacred due to the fact that Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith, spent his youth herewith his sister, Bibi Nanaki. It was the ardent desire of the Maharaja to raise a memorial befitting the historic and religious importance of the place.

Respecting the religious sentiments of his Muslim subjects, the Maharaja got constructed in his capital a new mosque. It was, indeed, a unique building in India built in Moorish style. It was designed by the famous French architect, M. Manteaux. It had a large compound paved with the purest Indian marble while the inner dome had been decorated by the artists of the Mayo School of Art, Lahore.¹² It is significant to observe that the Kapurthala state authority had taken up the task of constructing *gurdwaras* and *masjids* as a part of public works which may appear to be strange to the present-day scholars. But it should not be forgotten that the Princes and Chiefs of the Princely states considered it their duty to provide suitable places of worship to their subjects and the Maharaja of Kapurthala was no exception. At any rate, it furnishes a clear proof of the fact that though the Maharaja was a Sikh, he had a secular outlook and spent money from the state exchequer not only for the *gurdwaras* but also for the *masjids* and *mandirs* to meet the requirements of his Muslim and Hindu subjects.

10. Sardar Raj Kumar, *Modern Kapurthala and its Maker*, Lahore, n.d., p.15; Reports on the Administration of the Kapurthala state (hereafter given as *KAR*) for the years 1915-16, p. 44 and 1918-19, p.47.

11. Sardar Raj Kumar, *op.cit.*, p.15.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

Jagatjit Singh had appointed persons of all the three communities on high government jobs. For example, a Muslim, Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Hamid held the high office of Chief Secretary and then of Chief Minister of the state for many years. Likewise, Sardar Nabi Bakhsh, Colonel Asghar Ali, Khan Bahadur Mian Jamal-ud-din, Chaudhri Safdar Ali Khan, Mohammad Zia-ud-din, Chaudhri Sadulla Khan and Abdul Majid were among the notable Muslims who held high positions in the state.¹³ Similarly, the Hindus like Diwan Bhagwan Das, Diwan Dhuma Mal, Diwan Harikishan Das, Sardar Bhagat Ram, Sardar Babu Lal, Sardar Sureshar Das, Sardar Kanshi Ram, Sardar Ajudhia Das, etc. had been employed on high jobs in the state.¹⁴ The Sikhs like Sardar Bhagat Singh and Sardar Gulab Singh worked on exalted positions of Chief Minister and Chief Secretary respectively in the state. Besides, the sons of the Maharaja - Tikka Raja Paramjit Singh, Maharaj Kumar Amarjit Singh and Maharaj Kumar Karamjit Singh - were associated on high positions in the civil and military administration of the state. Major-General Puran Singh, Colonel Nihal Singh, Captain Achhar Singh, Colonel Inder Singh, Major Jai Singh, Major Jagat Singh, Sardar Suchet Singh, Arbel Singh etc. were the other prominent Sikhs holding responsible jobs in the state administration.¹⁵

In 1934 the Council constituted by the Maharaja consisted of six members: (1) Abdul Hamid, the Chief Minister and President of the Council; (2) Maharaj Kumar Amarjit Singh, Vice-President; (3) Sardar Sureshar Das, Home Minister; (4) Ajudhia Das, Finance Minister; (5) Colonel Asghar Khan; and (6) Sardar Puran Singh.¹⁶ It is significant to observe that these six members had been taken from all the three communities - two from each community.

Quite a large number of European Christians were appointed by the Maharaja on various high administrative posts. Of these mention may be made of A.R. Wood, A.W. Healy, A.H. Town, G.R. Dallimore, Townsend, C.S. Rundle, H.J.A. Bowden, Dr. Warburton, Dr. J. Fairweather, Miss G. Friend Pereira, Col. Donnelly, Davies, Major Foxmale and Lt. Col. J.C.S. Hadaway.¹⁷

13. *Ruling Princes and Chiefs, Notables and Principal Officials of the Punjab Native States*, Lahore, 1918, p.12.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 11; *KAR* for 1913-14, p. 65; *KAR* for 1915-16, pp. 33, 49; *KAR* for 1932-33, p.56.

16. Crown Representative Records, Punjab States, Microfilms, Acc. No. 9, Reel 4, File No. 47- p (Sec.) - 34 (NAI, New Delhi).

17. *KAR* for 1878-79, pp. 14,25, 26, 34; for 1879-80, p.25; for 1881-82, pp. 13, 28; for 1883-84, pp. 21, 23; for 1913-14, p.56; for 1919-20, p. 46; for 1940-41, p.39; Also see, Kapurthala State Records, *Basta* 4, 1904, File No. 35/B (PSA, Patiala).

Three Europeans, named L. French, G.T. Fisher and John Coldstream, were elevated to the position of Chief Minister.¹⁸ The appointment of so many Europeans on high posts incidentally indicates that Maharaja Jagatjit Singh accepted the guidelines of the British authorities completely in the matters of administration but it may be argued in his favour that he had made all appointments in various departments of administration on merit and he did not allow the communal prejudices to warp his judgement.

It is important to observe that in 1915 the Eighth Session of the Sikh Educational Conference had passed a Resolution (No. 17) requesting the Maharaja of Kapurthala to increase the number of Sikh professors in the Randhir College, Kapurthala. But the Maharaja did not accept this request, pointing out that in making appointments in the state merit and not creed was the paramount consideration.¹⁹

The liberal and 'secular' policy followed by Maharaja Jagatjit Singh was not to the relish of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) and Shiromani Akali Dal.²⁰ The leaders of these two organizations began to denounce in strong terms what they considered anti-Sikh attitude of the Maharaja. They alleged that in spite of the fact that the Kapurthala state was the first Sikh state which had been founded by Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, the staunchest *amritdhari* Sikh, and the founder of Sikhism Guru Nanak Dev had got his enlightenment at Sultanpur (in the territory of the Kapurthala state), the present Maharaja of the state had deviated from the principles and practices of the Sikh faith. He had shaved or cut off his *kesh* (hair) and *darrhi* (beard) and had thereby become a *patit*. In November 1942 Master Tara Singh wrote a letter to the Maharaja in which he alleged that the Muslim Prime Minister of the state, Khan Bahadur Mian Abdul Aziz, was 'an anti-Sikh intriguing man' who had gone to the length of proposing to some Hindu gentlemen to form an alliance with him against the Sikhs. The Sikh officials holding key positions in the state had been removed from the service on one excuse or another; the latest victim of this 'intriguing Prime Minister' was Sardar Arbel Singh, Principal of the Randhir College. He further charged that the condition of the Sikhs in

18. Report on the Administration of Punjab and its Dependencies for the year 1909-10, p.2; KAR for 1937-38, p.11.

19. See *Basta* 29, 1916, File No. M/5-35-16 (PSA, Patiala).

20. The SGPC was established in November 1920 with the object of managing the Sikh *gurdwaras* in accordance with the principles of Sikhism. Soon after (20 December 1920) Shiromani Akali Dal was established to put pressure for bringing the *gurdwaras* under the control of Sikh *Panth* and to protect and promote the interests of the Sikhs.

the Kapurthala state was worse than in the Punjab or in any non-Sikh state, except Malerkotla. The Sikhs of the Kapurthala state were 24 per cent of the population and they paid 40 per cent of the revenue and *abiana* of the state but their proportion in the state services was only 9 per cent; whereas the Sikhs in the Punjab were only 13 per cent but they got 20 per cent of the services. He remarked that the Sikh religion and Sikh community were being ignored in the state. It was a matter of shame for Sikh community that in the palace of the Kapurthala state, *halal* meat was being cooked for the royal family. Sikhism, he said, was on its last legs in the state, adding, "We do not tolerate such a state of things even in Muslim or Hindu States. The Sikhs will make every effort to prevent the State being turned into an anti-Sikh State."²¹

The Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal met in Amritsar on 9 December 1942 under the presidentship of Master Tara Singh. Kapurthala was the main subject of discussion in the meeting. Master Kishen Singh, a prominent Kapurthala Akali, had been especially invited to give the *Dal* an account of the local state of affairs. This meeting passed a resolution to the following effect:

"The Shiromani Akali Dal had expressed its opinion more than once before that no *patit* should be the ruler of a Sikh State. Since the Maharaja of Kapurthala had become *patit* by shaving or cutting his *darrhi* and hair, he should no longer remain ruler of the State.

Kapurthala was the most sacred State from both Panthic and purely religious point of view and the Sikh *Panth* viewed with grave concern the present state of things in which the Sikh religion, the Sikh tradition and the Sikh character were being ignored...the present administration of the State had almost completely wiped out all the Sikh influence in the administration by removing all those Sikhs from the higher posts who were suspected of being *pacca* Sikhs."²²

The Shiromani Akali Dal resolved that 3 January 1943 be fixed as the 'Kapurthala Day' on which public meetings should be held in each city and town and resolutions adopted condemning the rule of the Kapurthala Maharaja; that all the Sikhs, particularly the *Akali jathas*, *Singh Sabhas* and other Sikh public organizations be requested not to honour the Maharaja on any occasion

21. Letter from Master Tara Singh to Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala, dated 21 Nov. 1942, Crown Representative Records, Punjab States, Microfilms, Acc. No. 6, Reel 1, File No. 53-p (Sec.)-43 (NAI, New Delhi).

22. Extracts from Resolution passed by the Working Committee of Shiromani Akali Dal on 9 December 1942, *ibid.*

whatsoever till he assured that every effort would be made to re-establish the Sikh character of the state. The Shiromani Akali Dal called upon all the Akali *jathas* to obtain pledges from and prepare lists of the Sikhs who might volunteer to make every sacrifice in the coming struggle, if need be.²³

Early in January 1943 the Maharaja addressed a communication to the Resident, Punjab states in which he referred to Master Tara Singh's "inaccurate allegations and uncalled for agitation." He submitted in his defence that Master Tara Singh had no ground whatsoever to accuse his government of 'trampling upon Sikh rights.' It had been an old rule in the state that in the Army the Sikhs formed two-thirds of the soldiery and at present the vast majority of Army officers in the state were Sikhs. In the civil administration, too, a good number of Sikhs had been employed on important posts.²⁴ The Maharaja pointed out that his Sikh subjects had a long record extending over many generations of loyal services to the state and they strongly resented Master Tara Singh's attempt to dictate as to what his government should do. Master Tara Singh, briefly, desired three things: that the Maharaja should declare Kapurthala a Sikh state; that Sikhs should have at least 50 per cent of the posts in the state; and that Ruling family should bow down to his version of what true Sikhism was. The Maharaja saw no reason why Master Tara Singh should be encouraged in the belief that he was a new *Guru* whom every Sikh was bound to obey. The Paramount Power should let Master Tara Singh understand that he could not be allowed to create unrest and disorder inside a state under sectarian pretexts. As regards declaring Kapurthala a Sikh state, Master Tara Singh's position was hopeless. Over 56 per cent of the population in the Kapurthala state was Muslims and no declaration by him (Maharaja) could obliterate the significance of that fact. In the performance of his duties, a Ruler, according to the tenets of every creed on this earth, was and ought to be above sectarian prejudices. In the end, he requested that the Governor of the Punjab and the Crown Representative should be intimated his views.²⁵

23. *Ibid.*

24. The Sikhs at that time held these important positions in the state: Inspector- General of Police, Principal Randhir College, Revenue Assistant (next to Revenue Minister), Excise and Income-Tax Officer, two Magistrates, one *Tahsildar*, Superintendent Veterinary, Inspectress of Girls' Schools, Headmistress of Phagwara Girls' School and President State Soldiers Board.

25. D.O. Letter, dated 10 January 1943 from Maharaja of Kapurthala to Resident, Punjab States, Crown Representative Records, Punjab States, Microfilms, Acc. No. 6, Reel 1, File No. 53-p (Sec.) -43 (NAI, New Delhi).

The Kapurthala State Council carefully considered the situation that had arisen on account of the Akali agitation. It decided to take action against those subjects of the state who had been since some time making speeches against the Maharaja's person and his government. The State Council requested the Maharaja to take steps to ensure that the Punjab government would adopt suitable measures to prevent the inroad of Sikh *jathas* adjoining British areas, and recommended that the presence of outsiders in the meetings in the state should not be allowed. It opined that timely use of the Indian States Protection Act by the Punjab authorities would go a long way to restrict the evil effects of the movement. The Resident, Punjab States discussed the problem fully with the Chief Minister of the state and took note of the arrests the Kapurthala Darbar had decided to make. He informed the Maharaja that the provisions of the Indian States Protection Act had been extended to the districts of Amritsar, Jalandhar and Ferozepur.²⁶ He also apprised the Punjab government of the situation in the Kapurthala state.

The Governor of Punjab wrote to the Viceroy that the Akalis had been concentrating their attention on the Kapurthala state and levelled baseless allegation against the '*Patit* Maharaja' to the effect that he had been ignoring the rightful claims of the Sikh community. He informed the Crown Representative that the Punjab government had been doing whatever it could to prevent the Akali campaign from reaching serious developments and expressed the hope that before long it would subside.²⁷ The Viceroy, in reply, directed the Punjab government that it should set its face firmly against the Akali campaign and give all possible protection to the Ruler and the government of Kapurthala.²⁸

26. D.O. Letter No. 209-R/K-15-42, dated 6 February 1943 from Resident, Punjab states to Maharaja of Kapurthala, *Ibid.*

27. Extract from private and personal Letter, dated 13 February 1943 from Governor Punjab to the Viceroy of India, *ibid.*

28. Extract from Letter, dated 15 February 1943 from Viceroy of India to Governor Punjab, *Ibid.*

THE RADHA SOAMIS OF BEAS : ROLE AND IMPACT

*Balwant Singh Malhi**

The socio-religious movements in all times have made actions and reactions upon each other. In India, socio-religious movements strongly affected the Indian society in 6th century B.C. As a result, these movements such as Jainism and Buddhism, attracted a good number of followers while the efforts were also made by the conservatists of the society to reform their systems and make them to-date up.¹

Almost same was the fate of the Christianity and the Islam in their respective lands. In 14th century India, the efforts of the Bhakti and the Sufi reformers were also tried in the same direction. The Maulanas and the Pandits opposed the spread of the teachings of the Sufi Saints and the Bhakti reformers.

In the Punjab during the period of the ten Sikh Gurus a great conflict arose and even the Hindu Rajas opposed the reformation of the society by the Sikh Gurus. The Islam and the traditional rulers opposed it tooth and nail for nearly two centuries till it could shun the bonds of Islamic slavery and form an independent kingdom in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1839).²

In the 19th century, by the advent of Christian missionaries a great transformation was caused in the attitude of Indians towards religion. Religious movements of the time upheld a new approach towards religion. They tried to become rational and practical. Their major aim was to make the prevalent religions more and more simple. Some of these also contributed by infusing a new vitality in the age old beliefs and practices.³

If we take the case of 19th century socio-religious movements the earliest was Brahmo Samaj founded in 1828. The next was the Radha Soami tradition founded in 1861. The Arya Samaj, The Theosophical Society, The

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1. Farquhar J.N., *Modern Religious Movement in India*, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, Delhi, 1967, p. 154.
2. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, 1839-1974, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1966, reprint, 1977, p. 11.
3. Mark Juergens Meyer, *Radha Soami Reality—The Logic of a Modern Faith*, Princeton University Press, New York, 1991, p. 4.

Rama Krishna Mission, The Nirankari and the Namdhari movements in Punjab came somewhat later. While all other movements aimed at just to remodel their respective religions and stop conversion, the aim of the Radha Soami movement was to bring about a spiritual renaissance in the country.

The declaration of Brahmo Samaj that religion was above the distinctions of caste and creed served as a prelude to the Radha Soami faith. It is open to all and recognizes no distinctions of caste, creed, religion or nationality. While the Brahmos were lulled to sleep by the western cultures and an alien way of life, the Radha Soamis succeeded in retaining their Indian social and spiritual character. Thus the Radha Soamis tried to revive devotionism in modern times. The Radha Soamis did not have the iconoclastic zeal of the Arya Samajis when they denounced idol worship.⁴ Unlike them they refused to accept the infallibility of the *Vedas*. Beyond the Vedantist philosophy, the Radha Soamis preached Guru worship and the practice of *Surat Shabad Yoga*.⁵

The Arya Samajis had rejected the idea of guru worship and had preached, 'Go Back to the *Vedas*'. They adopted utilitarian attitude and advocated slight changes in the centuries old social evil of the caste system. Being influenced by the western culture and finding references from the early Vedic age they also preached for the better status of women. They also preached education and philanthropic activities. The Radha Soamis preached against the caste system when they held that every human being, irrespective of distinction of caste, colour, creed, sex and nation had the equal right to pursue and attain the spiritual world.⁶ While Arya Samajis stressed reviving the spirit of Hindu nationalism and bringing about political consciousness among the Hindu masses, the Radha Soamis avoided touching the political sphere and remained attached to the socio-religious activities. They were concerned with every people, while Arya Samajis sought the uplift of a section of the Hindus only. They were primarily concerned with spiritualism and attempted a spiritual synthesis by allowing the followers from all walks of life to retain their respective religions like Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity.⁷

4. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements*, p. 158.

5. S.D. Maheshwari, *Radha Soami Faith : History and Tenets Radha Soami Satsang*, Agra, 1954, p. 189.

6. Mark Jevergens Meyer, *Radha Soami Reality*, p. 9.

7. Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharma, Hindu Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab*, London, 1976, pp. 35, 36; Swami Dayanand Saraswati Satyarth Parkash (Hindi), Delhi, Samvat 2036, p. 594.

The Radha Soamis also have to do something in common with theosophical society. The theory of Karma, the theory of spiritual enlightenment of souls find reference in both the movements. Both permitted the followers into their folds without pre-requisite of the change of label. Theosophy also endorsed the mystic revelations stressed by the Radha Soamis. But the method of spiritual practice recommended by the Radha Soamis, *Surat Shabad Yoga*, appears to be more logical rather in its achievement in the educational field.⁸

The Rama Krishnities like the Radha Soamis revived the guru tradition but failed to look beyond the orbit of Hinduism. They just introduced a fusion between the path of knowledge and the absolute vedanta and the path of devotion.⁹ The Radha Soamis like the Krishnities are able to attract intelligent and educated disciples. Both have a remarkably synthetic outlook in their love for God and simplified religious dogmas. Both introduced novel concepts of the Supreme Being, his abode and envisaged a true and pure spiritual region of love of mercy and believed in an inner urge of self realization in human life and laid stress on the intuitive personal aspect of religion.¹⁰

Both Arya Samaj and the Radha Soami Movements emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. Both were a non-Punjabi product. Arya Samaj was founded by Soami Dayanand Saraswati on April 10, 1875 at Bombay while the Radha Soami movement was started by Shiv Dyal Singh (Soami Ji) on *Basant Panchmi* day in 1861 at Agra. Both travelled to Punjab with a gap of more than three decades; Arya Samaj Lahore was founded in 1877. Baba Jaimal Singh settled at Beas in 1891. The target of Soami Dayanand was the Urban Hindus while the Jaimal Singh had decided to address the village Sikh folk. Both were critical of the prevailing malpractices in their respective faiths. Both denounced idol worship, pilgrimage, caste system, singing hymns, performing *hawans* and the *Akhand Paths* (of *Adi Granth*), yet both had sympathy for their holy scriptures and showed respect for them.¹¹

8. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 143.

9. Farquhar, J.N., *Modern Religious Movements*, p. 160.

10. Farquhar, p. 161.

11. Sawan Singh remarks, 'One cannot attain salvation by external rites leading life of outward piety, undertaking pilgrimage, bathing in sacred rivers and pools, keeping fasts, engaging in yoga (Hath Yoga) or worship the idols and ancestors. These are just sensual pleasure and can only please the sensual organs of the body. True happiness or bliss and salvation are attainable only by the company of saints and the practice of *Surat Shabad Yoga*. Sawan Singh, *Spiritual Gems (1896-1948)*, Radha Soami Satsang Beas (1963), letter no. 54, p. 178.

On the issue of Guruship, both differed. For the Arya Samajists, the Guru was like a guide just as Father, Mother and a teacher while the Radha Soamis held the Guru in high esteem. Though Arya Samajists believed in the transmigration of souls, they gave no importance to the Guru as the emancipator of soul which is basic in Radha Soamis. Though the Samaj believed in hell and Heaven and never looked beyond it Radha Soamis are known to have discovered higher spiritual realities and they hold hell and heaven as a kingdom of Brahma which is much lower than the Radha Soami *Dham*. The Radha Soami *Dham* has also been referred as *Nij Dham*, *Nij Desh* : the Samaj and the Radha Soamis both believe in *Karma* Theory but for the emancipation of the soul from the circle of life, death and rebirth Radha Soamis believe that without the help of a living Guru and the practice of *Surat Shabad yoga* salvation can not be attained.

Arya Samajists turned nationalists and abandoned for a while the religious reformation.¹² For the purpose of rebuilding the future *Samaj* (Society) the Arya Samajists to commemorate Soami Dayanand started Dayanand Anglo Vedic (DAV) institutions from primary to post-graduate level. But the Radha Soami movement kept itself away from politics and educational institution and remained busy in developing their spiritual centre at Beas.

Though both the movements started with the aim to reform their respective religions, with the passage of about three decades, the Samajists again turned conservative and came to be dominated by the urban high caste Hindus. They turned hostile towards the Radha Soamis because of the critical attitude of Shiv Dyal Singh the founder Guru of the Radha Soamis expressed in his work *Saar Bachan* compiled in 1884. In this book Shiv Dyal had criticized the ritualism and superficial practices of all religions like Vedic and Puranic faith, Jainism and Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism and Christianity.¹³

Though the Samajists did care very little about the preachings at Beas, they opposed Kamta Prasad Sinha of Ghazipur in 1911 at Amritsar by pelting stones and creating rowdies. A few days later in the same year when he reached Lahore he was received with anti-Radha Soami slogans

12. Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharama, Hindu Consciousness in the 19th Century, Punjab*, London, 1976, p. 34.

Ajit Singh, *Buried Alive*, Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 41; Chhabra, G.S., *Advanced History of the Punjab*, Volume II, Jullundhar, 1972, p. 429.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

and pamphlets were distributed against him. As a result none of the masters from outside Punjab dared to visit Punjab for thirty years.

In November 1931 Anand Swarup (Sahib Ji Maharaj) the successor of Bagh Singh Agra came to Lahore and stayed for a week and delivered lectures on the role of religion in nationalism¹⁴ and on the invitation of Sanatan Dharma Sabha spoke on the utility of meditation.¹⁵ Though there was no unpleasant incident, his lectures were targeted by the vernacular press of Lahore both by the Hindus and the Sikhs in their daily and weekly newspapers.¹⁶

Arya Samajists did not spare environment for a *Jehad* against the Radha Soami. After two years when he again delivered a Satsang at Radha Soami Satsang Centre Amritsar on the invitation of Sawan Singh, they were opposed by the orthodox Hindus and Sikhs jointly and the followers were threatened with dire consequences.¹⁷ An air of hatred for the word Radha Soami and their Guru prevailed upon but the Radha Soamis never reacted. This led Anand Swarup to compile *Yatharath Prakash Mukamal* in 1934 which proved helpful in justifying the faith and cooling down the opponents.¹⁸

Sawan Singh to avoid such things busied himself in spreading the faith by touring the cities of Peshawar, Rawal Pindi, Gujrat, Jehlem, Sialkot, Jhang, Multan and the villages (now all in Pakistan).¹⁹ At Beas Sawan Singh received deputations of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, Punjab Pritinidhi Sabha and other intellectuals, hosted them for weeks and sent them satisfied.²⁰

Another deputation led by Hans Raj from Jullundhar accompanied among others by Pandit Thakur Chand Sharma and Vir Bhan, all eminent Hindu personalities²¹ called on Sawan Singh at his residence, Elismayer

14. See, *Saar Bachan (Poetry)*, *Bachan 22*, *Shabad 3* and *Radha Soami Teachings*, p. 205.

15. *Radha Soami Satsang Sabha*, Dyal Bagh, Agra; *Souvenir*, Radha Soami Satsang (1861-96), Agra, 1962, p. 139.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

17. *Diary of Sahib Ji Maharaj*, Part-II, p. 224, *Prem Parcharak*, Weekly (Urdu), February 1, 1932, Dyal Bagh Agra, p. 4; *Riyasat* (Urdu), January 15, 1934, Delhi.

18. *Riyasat* (Urdu), *Loc.cit.*

19. Anand Sarup, *Yatharath Parkash, Mukamal* (Urdu), Agra, 1934, p. 2.

20. At Multan he was opposed by Muslims but Sawan Singh directed his followers to remain peaceful and completed his tour programs. After partition he concentrated on the hilly areas of Punjab, Himachal and Jammu & Kashmir. Daryai Lal Kapoor, *Call of the Great Master*, Radha Soami Satsang, Beas, 1969, p. 137.

21. Hans Raj was a Barrister of Jullundhar and a renounced Arya Samajist. He was also a member of the Viceroy's council. Vir Bhan was Deputy Director of Industries, Punjab.

(Dalhousie, H.P.) and held long discussions on the holy scriptures of all faiths like *Vedas*, *Bible*, *Quran* and *Adi Granth*. Sawan Singh satisfied them that the method of *Surat Shabad Yoga* is the essence of all religions. Thus Sawan Singh won his opponents by love and humility, raised the prestige of his faith in the Punjab and the adjoining areas.

The Nirankari movement which was started by Dyal Das a Hindu Khatri of Peshawar with a slogan 'praise be to the formless creator, worship of mortals is of no avail.'²² soon acquired the status of the worship of Guru. The Guruship among the Nirankaries has become a common feature like the Radha Soamis. Both of them by condemning the pilgrimage have established their own places of veneration; the Nirankaries established Dyalsar after the name of their Guru on the bank of Layee River and after 1947 established their centre at Chandigarh. The first centre of Radha Soamis is in Agra and the second in Punjab at Beas and by the splinter groups at many other places.²³ Both the movements do not believe in the worship of *Granth* as Guru but substitute it by a living Guru. They address their Gurus with honorifics such as Sri Sat Guru (the true Guru), Hazur Sahib (his holy eminence) and Maharaj etc. After the expiry of both the founder Gurus their *sendals* were worshipped as an object of veneration at Soami Bagh Agra and at Dyalsar at Rawal Pindi. At Rawal Pindi they were placed alongside the *Adi Granth*.²⁴ While the Radha Soamis have not tried to standardize any rituals regarding with marriage and death rites, the Nirankaries have tried to start new practice in as such as they were based on *Adi Granth* and a departure from the Hindu sacred Texts.²⁵

The Namdhari sect was founded by Balak Singh (1797-1862), who due to his personality and speaking power was looked upon by his followers as reincarnation of Guru Gobind Singh. His successor Ram Singh (1816-1885) who shifted to his native village Bhaini Sahib in Ludhiana district from Hazro the original headquarters of the sect introduced some changes in the form of worship, appearance and form of address which

22. *Dhan Dhan Nirankar Deh Dhari Sub Khawar*; Vol. II; Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, 1839-1974 of Oxford University Press, Indian Edition, 1977, p. 123.

23. See *Schism among the Radha Soamis*, Chapter IV of this work.

24. *The Holi Scripture of the Sikhs worshipped by them as living Guru*, Khushwant Singh, p. 124.

25. The Nirankaris claim that they were the first to introduce the Anand Marriage which is performed by circumambulating the *Granth*. The Anand Marriage Act legalizing such marriages was passed in 1909. For reference see Khushwant Singh, p. 134.

distinguished his followers from the rest of the Sikhs. Some of his disciples who chanted hymns like *darvesh*, worked themselves into state of frenzy and emitted loud shrieks : they came therefore to be named Kukas.²⁶

The Kukas turned political between the years 1867-1885. After the decease of Ram Singh he was succeeded by his younger brother Hara Singh who was confined to his residence by the British till his death in 1906. He was succeeded by Partap Singh (1906-61), who in turn was succeeded by Jagjit Singh in 1961. Both left all politics except their sympathy with the Indian National Congress.

The Kukas are a distinct sub-Sikh sect. Though, born out of Sikhism they maintain little intercourse with the parent community. They have their own Gurdwaras and only on rare occasions design to join Sikh religious processions. They do not marry with the Sikhs unless the party concerned accepts their persuasions.²⁷

The Kukas avoid idolatry, keep the *Adi Granth* without canopy (*Chandoa*), live simple life, earn their livelihood by hard labour, and observe a rigid code of conduct. They had evolved non-cooperation with the British government and boycott of British goods. They adhere to the theory of observance of the five Ks.²⁸

They believe in the *Adi Granth* as well as the *Dasam Granth* and believe in getting the baptismal *Khande Di Pahul*. They also keep a woolen rosary, a *seli*, a *Kamarkasa* and fix their turban (white in colour) with a different angle. They worship wermi at Bhaini Sahib, hold *hawans*, perform *ardas* in way of *Arti* by burning lamps and revere other articles used by the deceased Gurus at Bhaini Sahib (Ludhiana) and Jeewan Nagar, near Sirsa.

The Radha Soamis of Beas neither worship their own scripture *Saar Bachan*, nor the *Adi Granth* but they quote references about spiritualism from the both and from the spiritual aspects of the life of all the Sikh Gurus. They do not accept the baptismal of the *Khande di Pahul*, but at the same time do not condemn the policies and activities of the sixth and the tenth Guru as those for them were the needs of the time. Like Kukas they

26. J.S. Grewal, *Sikhs of the Punjab, The New Cambridge History of India*, Cambridge University Press, Reprint 1997, p. 144; Also see Khushwant Singh, pp. 128-129.

27. Khushwant Singh, p. 135.

28. 1. *Kes* (unshorn hair), 2. *Kanga* (permanent comb in the head for combing hair), 3. *Kachha* (Long shorts), 4. *Kara* (iron bangle to be worn in right hand), and 5. *Kirpan* (the sword for defence).

do not perform any *Hawans*.²⁹ They have similarities with Namdharis only as a spiritual movement. The Radha Soamis avoid musical instruments in spiritual discourses because they believe that the music diverts the seekers' mind from the meaning of the hymns to the simple enjoyment of sound. The Radha Soami Gurus prescribe no restrictions on the outwardly life of their followers rather allow them to remain in their parental religious outlook.³⁰ While caste may be a factor among the Namdharis; for Radha Soamis it is meaningless.³¹

Still both the sects have much in common. Both have had friendly relations since the time of their ancestors, at least from a century (1906-2007).³² Both have strict vegetarian diets and all form of flesh and their by products and all types of alcoholic drinks and intoxicants are prohibited. Both believe that the use of such eatables and drinks is harmful for the rise of spirituality and beholding God and the Guru within your body. Both are against idol worship and *samadh* worship and recommend a two and half an hours sitting for *Bhakti* everyday in the morning at 3 a.m.

They have extended courtesy on the succession of each others' Gurus. Maharaj Sawan Singh remained the head of Dera Beas (1903-1948), Partap Singh at Bhaini Sahib (Ludhiana) (1906-1959). Both treated each other as spiritual brothers. In 1940 Sawan Singh attended the inauguration of Jeewan Nagar Dera, Near Sirsa (Haryana) where Partap Singh purchased five hundred acres of land in 30 lac³³ rupees. Partap Singh came with his associates to bless Maharaj Jagat Singh on April 13, 1948 and Charan Singh on November 4, 1951 at Beas at the time of their succession. Charan Singh attended Jagjit Singh's succession on September 10, 1959 at Jeewan Nagar where out of love he was addressed as 108th Maharaj equal to the Naamdhari Gurus.³⁴ The heads of both the sects maintained strong social,

29. *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, March 18, 1973, pp. 13-14; Nahar Singh, *A Short Account of the Kukas or Namdharis*, Delhi (n.d.), pp. 17-18; Also see *Nirihlak*, Half yearly (Punjabi), March, 1978 (Ludhiana), p. 42.

30. Khushwant Singh, p. 127.

31. Bajwa, Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement*, Delhi, 1965, p. 23; *Illustrated Weekly of India*, March 18, 1975, p. 15. Ram Singh was a friend of Sher Singh, used to visit him at Mehma Singh Wala; Also see Mehar Singh, *Kur Na Pooje Sach Nao So Gharat Gharie* (Punjabi), Jullundhar, *Samat*, 2003, p. 138.

32. Kapoor, Daryai Lal, *Call of the Great Master*, p. 8.

33. *Akali Te Pardesi* (Punjabi), August 10, 1928; Also see Gokul Chand Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*, p. 135.

34. *Grace of Love*, Radha Soami Satsang, Beas, 2001, p. 158, information with photographs.

spiritual and personal links with each other. The major cause of cooperation between the two movements was the institution of the living Guru believed and advocated by both the sects.³⁵

The Sikh faith founded by Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was looked after by Guru Angad (1539-52). A spiritual hedge was constructed by Guru Amardas (1552-1574), Ram Das (1574-81) and a holy scripture named *Granth* was compiled by the fifth Guru (1581-1606). The fifth Guru had to sacrifice his life to protect the sanctity of the *Granth* at the hands of Mughal Emperor Jahangir (1605-27). The only son of Guru Arjan Dev and his successor, the sixth Guru Hargobind prepared the followers for self defence and rebuffed the Mughal army thrice, at Amritsar (1628), at Lehragaga (1631) and at Kartarpur (1634) and contributed the last ten years for the spiritual upliftment of the faith. The seventh (Guru Har Rai 1644-1661) and the eighth Guru preached peacefully.³⁶ The ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-1675) was again targeted to sacrifice his life by the Mughal Emperor (Aurangzeb 1658-1707) and his bureaucracy on the behest of Brahmins for self existence and independence of religion. The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh (1675-1708) transformed the faith by the establishment of Khalsa *Panth* in 1699 and sacrificed his four sons, mother and his own life for the protection of Sikhism and right to believe in the faith of one's choice. It was only after a further struggle of one hundred years that the Sikhs were able to carve an independent state (1799-1849)³⁷ as the Khalsa Raj.

The Radha Soami faith which though founded under the impact of *Adi Granth*³⁸ travelled to Punjab in 1891 under Baba Jaimal Singh (1891-1903) and gained some momentum under Sawan Singh (1903-1948). In 1920s, the Radha Soami colony at Beas started coming into existence and Sawan Singh toured then the undivided Punjab to preach *Surat Shabad Yoga*.³⁹ While at Beas and during his tours he preached in the revered presence of the *Adi Granth* and at Beas *kirtan* was performed and *Karah*

35. For details see G.S. Chhabra, *Advanced History of the Punjab*; Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*; and J.S. Grewal, *Sikhs of the Punjab*; Ganda Singh, *History of the Punjab*.

36. Indu Bhushan Bannerjee, *Evolution of the Khalsa*.

37. Kirpal Singh, *Baba Jaimal Singh : A Great Saint of India*, Sawan Singh Ruhani Ashram, 1967, p. 9.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

39. Daryai Lal Kapoor, *Ruhani Dairy*, Radha Soami Satsang, Beas, 1957.

Prasad distributed.⁴⁰ The seekers of Truth from the Sikhs particularly those who had watched the working of Sikhism and had experience and knowledge about the degeneration of the Sikh faith because of the absence of the living guru, started coming to Beas to attend his spiritual discourses and received initiation to the secret of five words for recitation and the method of *Surat Shabad Yoga* to be performed for the attainment of spiritual heights.⁴¹

The traditional Sikhs felt ostracized because the Guru did not lay stress on the militant aspect and gave only *Nam Dan* instead of *Khande Di Pahul*; the Khalsa baptismal. He preached from *Adi Granth* and the writings of the medieval saints.⁴² A feeling of hatred for the followers and their Guru and for the word Radha Soami developed in the minds of the traditional Sikhs as they stopped going to the Gurdwaras; the Sikh shrines sanctified by the presence of the *Adi Granth* only. There was no proper preaching except the personal life of the Gurus. The preaching of *Nam* and the unfolding of the technique to worship it was absent altogether.⁴³

Slowly many rumours started airing about the Radha Soamis of Agra and ignorantly were applied to Radha Soamis of Beas which further increased hatred for them. The traditional Sikhs hated to see and listen the Radha Soamis. Many times whenever they came to know that the speaker was Radha Soami they left the audience.⁴⁴

The intellectuals among the traditional Sikhs were against the Radha Soamis because Shiv Dyal Singh, the founder of the faith, had issued derogatory remarks against the Sikh priests in his work *Saar Bachan*.⁴⁵

40. Radha Soami Satsang, Beas, *Amrit Bachan*; Also see L.R. Puri, *Radha Soami Teachings*, Radha Soami Satsang, Beas, p.71; Daryai Lal Kapoor, *Dharti Te Swarag*, p. 49.

41. Sewa Singh, *Radha Soami Mat Prabodh* (Punjabi), Amritsar, 1934, pp. 112, 113.

42. Parmar Patter, *Radha Soami Satsang*, Beas, 1969, p. 37.

43. Sewa Singh, *Radha Soami Mat Prabodh*, Amritsar, p. 1934.

44. *Saar Bachan* (prose), Para No.27, p. 28.

45. Sewa Singh, *Radha Soami Mat Prabodh*, 1934, p.131; Also see Gokul Chand Narang, *Transformation of Sikhism*; Grewal, J.S., *Sikhs of the Punjab*; and Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs. Agya Pari Akal Ki Tabhi Chalaio Panth Sabh Sikhan Ko Hukam Hai Guru Maniyo Granth* (I have established the panth as ordained by God, all the Sikhs are directed to worship the *Granth* as Guru). For more details see Bhagat Singh Heera, *Guru Maniyo Granth*, National Book Shop, Delhi, 1992, pp. 25-54, and Harinder Singh, *Sikh Te Sikhi*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1999, pp. 44-47.

The traditional Sikhs opined that the institution of Guruship had been closed by the tenth Guru and he had enjoined upon them to look upon *Adi Granth* with the same reverence in future as the living Guru.⁴⁶

On the other hand the Radha Soamis were provided with a substitute in the form of living Guru and they found that all the rituals like, pilgrimage, caste system, the mechanical recitation of *Adi Granth* without understanding, the stress on physical features, which were condemned by the Sikh Gurus had crept up in Sikhism. They were tired of the stress laid on militant aspect and were unsatisfied because the faith had nothing more to offer.⁴⁷

The rapid growth of the Dera Beas during the 1930s and the compilation of '*Shabad di Mehma de Shabad*' by Sawan Singh in 1931 prove to be an immediate cause for the antagonism between the traditional Sikhs and the Radha Soami entrants and culminated in the form of Shiromani Radha Soami Mat Vicharni Sabha joined by the enthusiastic orthodox Sikhs of the surrounding areas.⁴⁸

The Sabha aimed at opposing the Radha Soami Satsang with the help of surrounding villages like Bal Sarai, Baraich, Buddha Theh and Baba Bakala. It also wanted to spread Sikhism among the Sikhs in these villages, and condemn the institution of living Guru as prorogated by Sawan Singh, to propagate the Guruship of the *Adi Granth* and to establish a Gurdwara in front of the Dera Beas. The *Granth* was taken with great pomp and show from the historic shrine of Baba Bakala and the historical days of the Sikhs were celebrated in addition to the monthly gathering of *Sankrant* on which a discourse was also delivered by Sawan Singh in the Dera.⁴⁹

The Sikhs sought the co-operation of Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee which bothered less about the activities of Vicharni Sabha. A gurudwara named Nanakgarh was constructed in front of the Dera and a Bhai appointed to carry on the daily routine. The Sabha remained

46. Radha Soami Satsang Beas, *Radha Soami Mat Updesh*, 1996, p. 27.

47. The members of the executive committee were :

- (1) Jamandar Khushal Singh, Baba Bakala, President.
- (2) Baba Basant Singh, village Chhapianwali, Vice President.
- (3) Giani Harcharan Singh Labana, Village Mangal Labana, General Secretary.
- (4) Major Lachman Singh, Additional Secretary.
- (5) Giani Ujagar Singh, Jathedar; Amar Singh; Baba Chet Singh and Kartar Singh Thekedar of Beas, all members.

48. Kapoor, Daryai Lal, *Call of the Great Master*, p. 131.

49. Daryai Lal, p. 131.

active for six years (1930-36) but after that its activities slowed down due to scarcity of funds, lack of stress on spiritualism, lack of qualified leadership, non-cooperation of the local area, non-cooperation of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC). The praise of Sawan Singh's spiritual power and his contribution in preaching the teachings of *Adi Granth* by Master Tara Singh, the then leader of the Akalis, who were representing the Sikh nation came to the rescue of the Radha Soami faith. On the other hand, Sawan Singh used the weapons of love and humility, the noble principles of forgiveness and embracing the opponents. His sound financial position also proved helpful. Ultimately the Gurdwara Nanakgarh which was established in 1932 was converted into a school in 1945. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee did not show any interest because of two reasons; firstly they were aware of the legal rights of the Dera. Secondly they were happy that the Radha Soami Gurus were preaching the teachings in hilly states and throughout India and thus performing true service as *Gurmukhs* in accordance with the message of the Gurus which the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee had felt itself incapacitated to do.⁵⁰

Hence, it can be fairly concluded that the Radha Soami movement has been opposed by the traditional faiths of the new entrants. It is somewhat natural. At all times such things have happened in the past and shall happen in future in one form or the other. The Radha Soami faith in the Punjab had its basis in the rural areas in the beginning which extended to the urban areas with the degeneration of urban socio-religious movements such as Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj. The followers of the traditional disciplines felt allergic with their departed fellows in the beginning but after realizing what the traditional faith had to offer against the Radha Soami system turned to prefer the Radha Soami faith for fulfillment of spiritual quest inside them.

50. The researcher has collected information by personal visits to the old *satsangis* at Dera and S. Kirpal Singh a student and initiate of Maharaj Jagat Singh (1950) r/o of Shukarpura, Batala; S. Natha Singh initiate of Maharaj Sawan Singh (1948) and Dharam Pal Singh initiate of Maharaj Charan Singh 1975. The record of the Shiromani Gurmata Vichar Sabha is lying with S.G.P.C., Amritsar.

A NOTE ON THE TRANSFORMATION IN THE NAMDHARI IDEOLOGY IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY

Joginder Singh*

In the second half of the 19th century, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh contemplated on the restoration of the Khalsa Raj, Sikh social order and polity. He launched a massive movement for these objectives. The British government perceived a serious threat to its existence and crushed this movement. For several decades, the British Government imposed severe penalties and restrictions on the Namdhari Sikhs, not allowing them even to hold religious congregations. Namdhari Guru Ram Singh's successor 'Satguru' Hari Singh tried his best to maintain cohesion and unity among his followers. He asked them to meditate on the name of God as he believed that *nam-simran* would make them spiritually stronger to face the crisis. In early years of 20th century, political scenario changed in favour of Namdhari Sikhs. 'Satguru' Partap Singh (1906-1959) resolved to shed off sectarian ideology of his predecessors and identify the Namdhari Sikhs with the nationalist forces like Congress and Socialists. He also contemplated on integrating the Namdhari Sikhs with the world of the Hindus. The paper examines the transformation in the latter aspect of the Namdhari ideology in early 20th century.

The *Satjug*, the spokesman of the Namdhari community, defined the role of the Namdhari Sikhs in the national perspective.¹ It reminded them that 'Satguru' Ram Singh had already set the practice of observing *swadeshi* and boycotting British courts, administrative services and educational institutions etc. Its message was that the Namdhari Sikhs should participate in the Non-Cooperation Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi.²

Simultaneously, for ending the social exclusion of the Namdhari Sikhs, *Satjug* advocated that they should identify themselves with the

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1. See, 'editorial note' *Satjug*, March-April 2001, p. 8.

2. For detail, see, Rattan Singh Jaggi, *Guru Granth Vishavkosh*, Pt. 1, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2002, pp. 79-80.

Hindus. For removing theological differences with the Hindus, it was argued that the Sikhs were Hindus and Sikhism was an off shoot of Hinduism. Inder Singh Chakarvarti was one of the Namdhari scholars who initiated this move. He knew that the popular theory of incarnation among the Sikhs of 19th century could build up philosophical linkages with the Hindus. He argued that the Sikh Gurus were *avtars* who came to this world on the command of *Akal Purakh* to liberate the suffering humanity. The theory of *avtarvad* is one of the cardinal principle of Hindu philosophy. According to *Sanatanist* Hindu philosophy *Ishvar* is formless and universal. He has had been appearing on the earth in its specific form which is the manifestation of his *yog-maya*. The Vedic literature, especially Puranic literature relates to the avtar-episodes (ਅਵਤਾਰ-ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ). The Shaivite Puranic literature refers to the several incarnations of Bhagwan Shankar. The Vaishnavite Puranas also refer to several incarnations of Vishnu. Important among these incarnations are Matrya, Kuram, Varah, Nirsihn (ਨ੍ਰਿਸਿੰਹ), Vaman, Purshuram, Ram, Krishan, Budh and Kalaki. Bhagvat Purana mentions twenty-two incarnations of Vishnu. One of the important attributes of incarnations of Vishnu is that they appear on the earth to save *dharma* from being supplanted by *adharma*. According to *Bhagvad Geeta*, Sri Krishan addressed Arjun and told him that whenever *dharma* was in danger, Vishnu appeared in the human form to save *dharma*.³

Inder Singh Chakarvarti contextualized Sikhism in the above-mentioned theory and argued that the ten Sikh Gurus appeared on the earth for protecting *Vedic Dharam*. To begin with Guru Nanak, he said that he protected *Vedic Dharam* in terms of showing real path to those people who were corrupt and had forgotten God's name. Guru Nanak goaded them to meditate on the name of God and told them to observe truth, continence and mercy. Continuing the Sikh tradition of protecting Hindu religion, Guru Tegh Bahadur laid down his life for the sake of *tilak-janju*. His *kurbani* (sacrifice) instilled a spirit of sacrifice among the dead Hindu race. He cited couplets of *Sri Guru Partap Suraj* and *Panth Prakash*. Kashmiri Pandits pleaded with Guru Tegh Bahadur that if Hindus eliminated then who would perform *yag-havan*.⁴ Guru Tegh Bahadur acceded their request and set out from Anandpur on 11th July, 1675 and was executed on 11th November,

3. Inder Singh Chakarvarti, "Gur Avtar", *Satjug*, Sri Bhaini Sahib, 1929, pp. 8-9.

4. *Ibid.*

1675.⁵ Consequently, the Hindus continued to perform *havan-yag*. For corroborating his version of execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Chakarvarti cited Guru Gobind Singh's writing *Bachitra Natak*. He argued that this writing was a testimony of his father's execution which said that⁶

"He protected their *tilak* and *janeu*;

In this age of darkness, he performed a grand deed;

He made the supreme sacrifice for the sake of faith.

He gave his head, but uttered not a groan.

This martyrdom he endured to uphold righteousness.

He gave his head, but displayed not his charisma...."

Taking a leap forward in this context, Guru Gobind Singh created *Khalsa Panth* which was to work as the volunteer corps of Hindu race. Guru took this initiative because the Hindus had lost a sense of pride and self-respect. They were helpless even to defend the honour of their wives and daughters.⁷

For substantiating his theory of socio-cultural Hindu-Sikh commonality, Chakarvarti profusely quoted couplets from the *Adi Granth*, works of Guru Gobind Singh, Bhai Gurdas (of Behlo) and Bhai Santokh Singh. Quoting Bhai Gurdas, Chakarvarti said that Guru Gobind Singh performed *Yagya* for the revival of Hindu race. Chakarvarti further said that Guru Gobind Singh himself cited some couplets in the presence of Pandit Kesho Das for appreciating the relevance of performing the ritual of *havan*.⁸ Kesho Das was a *tantrika* (practitioner of magical techniques) of Varanasi. He came to Anandpur and claimed that if adequate provisions were made available to him he could make the Goddess Durga manifest. For months he tried his best but failed to demonstrate the appearance of Durga. On his disappearance, Guru Gobind Singh himself performed *havan*. Moreover, Chakarvarti cited the couplet of Giani Gian Singh for telling the reader that Guru Gobind Singh himself believed in the theory of incarnation and recognised the relevance of performing *yag-hom*. Performance of this

5. As the story goes "at Chak Nanaki (Anandpur), a group of Kashmiri *pandits* driven to desperation by the bigoted policies of the Mughal Governor Iftikhar Khan (16-71-75) called on Guru Tegh Bahadur on 25 May, 1675 to narrate their tale of woe....." *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism* (Harbans Singh), Vol. IV, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1998, p. 332.

6. *Op. cit.*, p. 333.

7. Inder Singh Chakarvarti, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.

8. *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

ritual could dispel ignorance and evil-spirits. It could also bestow spiritual strength and relieve of any crisis. Besides, it could also instill a spirit of chivalry and fearlessness in the people. Above all, it was the *havan* which produced *kirpan* for eliminating the devils. The *devatas* used the *kirpan* for defeating *rakhash*.⁹

Briefly speaking, Chakarvarti's basic contention was that the Sikh Gurus, especially Guru Gobind Singh came to this earth for saving Hindu *zati* which was going down spiritually and morally. Moreover, when Guru Gobind Singh performed *yag-havan*, the Turks lost their grandeur and star of Hindus began to twinkle as the latter were liberated from fear and despondency.

The Hindu leaders responded to the Namdhari ideology in 1920s. Bhai Parmanand, a Hindu nationalist, wrote a small article for the Namdhari periodical, the *Satjug*. The article was published under the title "Satguru Ram Singh Ji" in its *Basant Ank* (Issue) of 1928. He argued that the movement founded by Satguru Ram Singh was religious in its character but was transformed into a political. Satguru Ram Singh taught the Indian people that if they wanted to attain freedom they should learn to lay down their lives. They should lead a simple life and control their worldly desires. Such life-style was essential pre-requisite for attaining freedom. Perceiving the political character of Guru Ram Singh's movement, Bhai Parmanand argued that it was he who evolved the concept of non-cooperation asking the people to boycott the British courts and goods. Satguru preached this concept in that time when English education was yet to be started. He was forerunner of Mahatma Gandhi in terms of perceiving and advocating the programme of non-cooperation.¹⁰

Swami Sawantarta Nand, another Arya Samajist leader of Guru Dat Bhawan Lahore, found similarities in the programmes of Arya Samaj and Namdhari Sikhs. The Swami said that both believed in the relevance of living Guru who could dispel ignorance of his followers. He argued that a scripture could not speak itself or hold a discourse or show the real path to the followers. It was the living guru who could alone interpret a scripture; share the mystical experience and lead to an enlightened path etc. It is for this reason that Guru Ram Singh assumed the role of an embodied guru. He reminded the Namdhari Sikhs that the Arya Samajists too believed in this

9. *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

10. Bhai Parmanand, "Satguru Ram Singh Ji", *Satjug*, *Basant Ank*, 1928, p. 110.

principle. Secondly, like the Arya Samajists, the Namdhari Sikhs too performed *havan* and used *ghee* for *ahuti* liberally. Thirdly, both Arya Samajists and the Namdhari Sikhs were vegetarians and used *satwahik* food. Fourthly, both Arya Samajists and Namdhari Sikhs advocated that the marriageable age of a girl should not be less than 15 years. Fifthly, both were protagonists of *swadeshi* goods. Sixthly, both advocated the boycott of the British courts and settle their disputes locally.¹¹ The Swami disclosed that Inder Singh Chakarvarti, Nidhan Singh Alam and Mangal Singh approached him to write this article.

Infact, the Hindu leaders had a larger religious, cultural and political interests to respond to the call of the Namdhari Sikhs. Being the ideologues of the Arya Samaj and Hindu Mahasabha,¹² they believed that the Sikhs were an integral part of the Hindus. The Sikhs Gurus were concerned to reform and revitalize the contemporary Hindu society. When Guru Nanak came on the scene in Punjab in late 15th century, the condition of the Hindus was most deplorable. In the age of Vedic civilization, they led a pure and simple life but the emergence of the priestly class and its corrupt and dogmatic practices distorted the Vedic civilization and led to the decline of the Hindu society. Moreover, the advent of Islam in India gave a severe blow to the decline of Hinduism. Responding to the deplorable condition of the Hindus Guru Nanak diagnosed that the socio-religious revival was the only remedy to restore pristine purity of Hinduism. He tried to emancipate the Hindus from the futile rituals and customs which were constructed and imposed by the priestly class for its vested interests. He also tried to emancipate Hindus from the fetters of Hindu mythology; rejected the path

11. Swami Sawantarta Nand, "Sri Satguru Ram Singh Ji Aur Arya Samaj", *Basant Ank Satjug*, 1928, pp. 92-93.

12. The Hindu Mahasabha was founded in 1915 as a political party by Punjabi Hindus (qq.v.) resentful of the extra weightage given to Muslims in the province by the system of separate electorates introduced in 1909. Later, under the Presidentship of Madan Mohan Malaviya (q.v.), the Hindu Mahasabha overhauled its organization and declared its larger goal to be "the maintenance, protection and promotion of the Hindu race, Hindu culture and Hindu civilization for the advancement of the Hindu *Rashtra* (nation)." To that end it projected India as a Holy Land, adopted Hindi as its language, advocated cow protection as state policy, and encouraged an active program of *shuddhi*, or purification, and "reconversion" of Christians, Muslims and Sikhs (qq.v.) to the Hindu fold : Surjit Man Singh, *Historical Dictionary of India*, Vision Books, New Delhi, 2003, pp. 173-174.

of renunciation and lead the life of a household. He exhorted the people to meditate on the name of God; earn livelihood by honest means and show piety to the fellow beings. The Hindu leaders further believed that for fighting back the tyranny of the Muslim state, Guru Gobind Singh formed the *Khalsa* which was to be a vanguard of the Hindus.¹³

Such hypothesis was constructed by G.C. Narang which contained that "(a) Islam is an aggressive and fanatic religion; (b) the believers of Islam constitute a monolithic community irrespective of their social and spatial variations; (c) the Muslims (described as *mlechchha*) are different in all respects from the non-Muslim sections of society; (d) and, there is an innate enmity between the Muslims and the Hindus (including the Sikhs)."¹⁴

The perception of inherent antagonism between Sikhism and Islam — constant conflict between Sikhs and the Mughals, was politically motivated perception of the Hindu leaders. In early 20th century, those leaders wanted to construct Hindu *Rashtra* and its expansion in terms of bringing non-Muslims into the fold of the Hindu organisation. The Vedic interpretation of Sikhism of the Namdhari Sikhs conveniently suited to the Hindu leaders. They were quick to eulogise the Namdhari Sikhs as patriots and nationalists. They took pride in telling the Namdhari Sikhs that Guru Ram Singh was harbinger of freedom struggle in Punjab.

The implications of accepting theological position of the Arya Samajists and subsequently the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh by the Namdhari Sikhs were far reaching for the Sikh community. First and foremost was that it negated the construction of separate Sikh identity by the Singh Sabha scholars. It was on the premise of distinct socio-religious identity of the Sikhs that the Sikh leadership could ask for the political and constitutional rights of the Sikh community. Appreciating the distinct identity of the Sikhs and their services rendered to the *Raj*, the British, not only legitimised this identity but also recognised and conceded constitutional rights. In the wake of constitutional developments (Simon Commission, Nehru Report and Communal Award) in late 1920's and early 1930's, the Sikh leadership of the Shiromani Akali Dal, Central Sikh League and Chief Khalsa Diwan was struggling hard to increase the percentage of its communal representation on the constitutional bodies. Theoretically speaking, the Namdhari leadership put itself on the wrong side of the

13. K.L. Tuteja, "Interpreting Sikh History : A Study of Gokul Chand Narang's.....", pp. 416-418.

14. *Ibid.*

situation. Nevertheless, the threat of political hegemony of the Muslims after the announcement of the Communal Award was so comprehensive that the contradictions in the beliefs and practices of the Namdhari Sikhs and the Sikhs of the mainstream remained in the background. Understanding the challenge posed by the political and constitutional developments, the Namdhari Guru Partap Singh organised the Guru Nanak Leva Sarb Sampardai Conference for strengthening the Sikh communal solidarity in 1934.

Going a step forward in the process of cultural fusion with the Hindu organizations, the Namdhari Sikhs accepted the concept of Hindu *Rashtra*. This concept was advocated by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.¹⁵ The Namdhari Sikhs were fascinated by the propagation of this concept by V.D. Savarkar in 1937 when he was elected President of the Hindu Mahasabha. He used occasion of his presidential address in 1937 and then in 1938 to become the first Indian to pronounce that 'there are two nations in the main: the Hindus and the Moslems in India', pre-dating Jinnah's 1939 statement of the two nation-theory. When Savarkar visited Punjab in May 1938, the *Satjug*, the spokesman of the Namdhari community, asked the Namdhari Sikhs to accord a warm welcome to him. Savarkar addressed the Sikh *Sangat* in Ram Bagh, Amritsar on 12th May, 1938 and stated that the Sikhs were sons of Guru Gobind Singh and he himself was the son of Shivaji. The Hindus and Sikhs were inseparable 'cousins' who liberated India from the Muslim rule.

The Namdhari Sikhs' identification with Hindu *Rashtra* led them to believe that the Muslims under the leadership of the Muhammad Ali Jinnah

15. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh was founded by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar (1889-1940) in Nagpur as an instrument of Hindu cultural revitalization and consolidation in 1925. "On *Ram Navami* day, 1926, the infant organization, after considerable discussion between Hedgewar and his co-founders, gave itself the name of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Hedgewar insisted on the term '*rashtriya*' (national) for its exclusively Hindu organization, for he wanted to re-assert the identity of Hindu with *rashtriya*. A flag was chosen that allegedly belonged to Ram, and was said to have been used by Shivaji. A prayer, in mixed Hindi and Marathi, would be sung at the end of every *shakha* meeting, along with the slogans of *Rashtriya guru Samarth Ramdas ki jai* and *Bharat Mata ki jai*. The prominence of Shivaji, his flag, and his guru Ramdas in RS ritual gave it a strongly Maharastrian complexion, leading even to rumours that its aim was a Peshwa restoration" : *Khaki Shorts Saffron Flags*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1993, p. 18.

were determined to establish Muslim *Raj* in India. The *Satjug* analyzed the speeches made by Jinnah on different occasions and came to the conclusion that Jinnah was determined to destroy Indian unity.¹⁶ In fact, *Satjug* reiterated RSS doctrine codified by the M.S. Golwalkar who declared that "if the minority demands were accepted, Hindu National life runs the risk of being shattered."¹⁷ Golwalker perceived the Muslims as 'inveterate enemies' and wrote that the 'Hindus were at war with at once with the Muslims on the one hand and the British on the other.'¹⁸

The Namdhari Sikhs overlooked the dangerous implications of concept of Hindu *Rashtra* and continued their socio-cultural discourse with the Hindu organisation in the post-independence period. The Namdhari leadership revived the old Sikh tradition of paying homage to the sacred places of Hindus and witnessed the Hindu rituals. Following this tradition, Namdhari Guru Ram Singh undertook pilgrimage to the several sacred places like Kurukshetra and Hardwar. He also performed some rituals. In fact, he made *havan* and *yagya* an integral part of Namdhari *maryada* particularly related to marriage ceremony. Going a step forward in this regard, Namdhari Guru Partap Singh allowed his followers to attend functions of the Hindu organization like Vishav Hindu Parishad.¹⁹ The common cultural heritage helped the Namdhari Sikhs to identify themselves with the Hindu brotherhood.

Briefly speaking, both the Namdhari Sikhs and ideologues of Hindu organisations interpreted Sikhism on the promise that it was a modified form of *Vedic dharma*. They further argued that the Sikh Gurus came to this earth to save *Vedic dharma* and protect the Hindu race. Similarly, both advocated the concept of Hindu *Rashtra*. By its implication they stood for the two-nation theory. However, only distinction between the Namdhari Sikhs and the Hindu nationalists was that the former identified themselves with the Congress whereas the latter tried to emerge as the alternative of the Congress.²⁰

16. For detail, see, *Satjug*, 24 ਚੇਤਰ, 1955 (March 1938), p. 13; 16 ਵੈਸਾਖ, 1955 (April 1938), p. 5.

17. Francine, R. Frankel, *India's Political Economy 1947-2004*, Oxford, Indian Paper Backs, 2006, pp. 697-698.

18. Bipan Chandra, *Indian Struggle for Independence*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 1989, p. 437.

19. Pritam Singh Kavi, *Beete Diyan Piran*, Vol. 3, Sahit Parkashan, Delhi, 1992, p. 432.

20. Bipan Chandra, *op. cit.*, pp. 437-438.

BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF NAMDHARI SIKHS OF THREE VILLAGES: MUHAWA, KAKKAR AND BHOIEWALI

Amit Syal*

The Namdhari Sikhs of the Punjab Comprise a distinct Sikh sect. Their approximate number is four to five lakhs in Punjab. Majority of them belong to the rural areas. Their religious headquarter is at Bhaini Sahib, district Ludhiana. In late 19th and early 20th century, the Namdhari Sikhs were known as Kukas. The word *kuk* in Punjabi means a scream or shouts, in which they indulge while chanting the sacred hymns of their religious congregation. They break into ecstatic cries, which lead to their being called *kukas*. They were also called Namdhari because they were devotees of *Nam*, those attached to God's name.¹

In recent times, Namdhari Scholars define the word "Namdhari Sikhs" as "one who has the name of God (*naam simran*) in his or her heart." The Namdhari Sikhs adhere and strictly follow the teachings of the Sikh Gurus under the holy guruship of Guru Ram Singh. The Punjabis again became the *sant sipahis* and joined the *Sant Khalsa* whom people called Namdhari or Kuka Sikhs and they adhere to be orthodox, original Sikhs of the Gurus.²

The present attempt is to critically examine those beliefs and practices of the Namdhari Sikhs of three villages: Muhawa, Kakkar and Bhoiewali which they actually observe in their day today life.³ Theoretically, these Sikhs are aware about the Namdhari *maryada* which has been evolved by Namdhari Gurus and Intellectuals. The whole issue would be discussed with references

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1. Harbans Singh (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. II, Punjabi University Patiala, 1996, p. 532; Also see, McLeod, W.H., 'The Kukas a Millenarian sect of the Punjab', in *The Panjab Past and Present*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1979, p. 164.
2. Beant Kaur, *The Namdhari Sikhs*, New Delhi, 1999, p. 3.
3. These villages are located in Amritsar and Ajnala Tehsils. They are very close to Indo-Pak Border. The distance among these villages from Border is one, two and fourteen kilometers respectively. The interesting common demographic feature of these villages is that majority population comprises the Namdhari Sikhs. Whereas there is no such other village in Amritsar District where Namdhari Sikhs are in majority.

to Namdhari *maryada*.⁴

For the Namdhari Sikhs of these villages present 'Satguru' Jagjit Singh is continuing the institution of Guruship since the inception of the Namdhari Movement. The Namdhari Sikhs believe that Baba Balak Singh and Baba Ram Singh were eleventh and twelfth Sikh Gurus. Afterward this, *Guru Gaddi* is continuing under the successors of Baba Ram Singh. Like their counterparts the Namdhari Sikhs of these villages perceive that 'Satguru' Jagjit Singh is personification of God. He plays a significant role in their spiritual and temporal life. Satguru Jagjit Singh is ultimate authority. These Sikhs receive oral and written instructions as the *Hukam* of *Sachepatshah*. Like the main-stream of the Sikhs, the Namdhari Sikhs treat the *Adi-Granth* as a sacred book. They read and recite hymns of *Adi-Granth* daily. In their *dharamsalas*, *Adi-Granth* is installed on a pedestal in the central place of the building. Nevertheless, *Adi-Granth* is not *Guru Granth* for these Namdhari Sikhs.⁵

According to Namdhari *maryada*, each Namdhari Sikh is expected to observe strict code of conduct in his personal life. The *nitname* of the Namdhari Sikh is as follows: He arises early in the morning around 3 o'clock and takes full bath after attending the natural calls. Then he meditates on the name of God.⁶ However, the actual practice of these Namdhari Sikhs is slightly different. There are a few Namdhari Sikhs who get up around 3 o'clock in the morning. Majority of them wake up around 5 o'clock. After taking full bath either they meditate on the name of God in their homes or in the *dharamsala* of the village. After finishing routine work the Namdhari Sikhs again assemble in the *dharamsala* and hold *diwan* in the evening. They perform *kirtan* and *katha* from *Suraj Parkash*.⁷ It may be pointed here that *katha* of *Suraj Parkash* is no longer a tradition observed in the Singh Sabha *Gurdwaras*.

Namdhari Dress

The ideal Namdhari Sikhs are distinct in terms of their style of dress

4. There are several articles and books written by the Namdhari Scholars on the institution of *Guru* and *Granth* and Namdhari *maryada*. Important among these are: Nahar Singh, *Namdhari Itihas*, Vol. I, Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, 1959; Dhian Singh, *Sri Satguru Bilas*, Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, 1947; Nidhan Singh Alam, *Jug Paltoo Satguru*, Namdhari Sabha, Delhi, 1947; and Inder Singh Chakarvarti (ed.), *Namdhari Nitnam*, Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, 1935.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Kuldip Singh, *The Namdhari Movement Continuity and Change (1857-1959)*, Ph.D. Thesis, G.N.D. University, Amritsar, pp. 44-45.

7. *Interviews*; Also see, Kuldip Singh, *The Namdhari Movement: Continuity and Change (1857-1959)*.

and turban. They wear white *Kurta* and *Pajama* which are tailored in the traditional manner. Their turban is *sidha* (state) turban. Some of them also wear woollen rosary around their necks. Similarly, the ideal Namdhari women wear simple clothes made of cotton. Their dress comprises three parts: *chuni* (head cover) *Salwar* and *Kamiz*. The *Salwar* and *Kamiz* are stitched in such a manner that these cover the entire body. They keep their hair nots but no plates. They do not wear ornaments nor they use cosmetics.⁸ It may be pointed out here that the traditional dress of men and women has become a ceremonial dress in the sense that men and women wear such dress on some occasions like attending religious congregations in local *dharamsala* or while going to Bhaini Sahib headquarters. Majority of Namdhari men and women wear clothes stitched according to modern fashion. Like their counter parts, the Namdhari men of these villages use coloured turbans and wear shirts and pents. They also wear leather shoes. Use of wooden slippers known as *Kharawan* is no longer to be seen in the Namdhari houses. The Namdhari women too wear coloured clothes stitched in simple fashion. Some of them use ornaments and cosmetics.⁹

When we pointed out to some of the important Namdhari leaders of these villages that why the Namdhari Sikhs do not wear their customary dress, we were told that now a days they face a number of problems in public life. For instance, the Namdhari workers in the workshops can not wear the customary dress as it is accidental prone. The factory bylaws prescribe a uniform for the factory workers. Similarly, it was stated that the modern public schools, prescribe their respective uniforms to the school going children. Nevertheless, there are a few Namdhari families who have refused to compromise with the Namdhari dress.¹⁰

Mode of eating

In terms of eating habits, majority of the Namdhari Sikhs can be described as orthodox Sikhs. They are strictly vegetarians and do not use any type of intoxicants. Still majority of them avoid eating outside homes. So much so that some of them do not drink tap water. In most of the Namdhari houses the water wells have been constructed. In the houses of well to do Namdhari *jamindars* tubewells and submersible pumps have been installed for use of water. According to our survey 50% of the Namdhari population of these villages still observes taboos regarding their food. Rest of the 50%

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Interviews.*

10. *Ibid.*

Namdharis have started taking food outside. Whenever the occasion requires, they also take tea and cold drinks otherwise those are forbidden by the code of conduct.¹¹ Before they start eating, majority of the Namdhari Sikhs wash their hands and feet. They also pray to their satguru for his graciousness. After finishing the food, they ensure that no food particle or vegetable is left in the utensils. It may be pointed out that they do not use surf for cleaning the utensils.

Rituals and Customs related to Birth, Marriage and Death:

The birth of a child irrespective of its sex is received as the grace of God. Either after 13 or 40 days of birth, both mother and child are administered baptism. Since child is not able to recite the name of God, either the mother or the father or both perform the task. The *namkaran* to the child is given either by the elder of the family or of the village.¹² However, in most of the cases it is Baba Shinda ji, the local religious leader, who is called for this task. Some of the Namdhari families prefer to perform *Namkaran* at Bhaini Sahib. Nevertheless they do not celebrate birth of the child by organizing feasts and inviting kiths and kins on this occasion. The process of marriage ceremony begins with the selections of boys and girls. In most of the cases these are the parents who select or choose the partner. Before settling, Namdhari parents consult or take advice of the senior leaders particularly Baba Shinda ji. In most of the cases marriage ceremonies are solemnized at Bhaini Sahib headquarters. Before the ceremonies are conducted, some formalities are completed. Both boy and girl are administered *amrit*. Like the mainstream of the Sikhs, the *Anand* ceremony is performed but along with the performance of *havan*.¹³

Although it is mandatory for the Namdhari Sikhs to perform marriage ceremonies at Bhaini Sahib head quarters, yet Namdhari Sikhs of these villages perform such ceremonies at Mohawa when Holla Mohala is organized. They do not organize their marriages in the marriage-palaces. In recent times some of the Namdhari families have started compromising with the marriage taboos. They give and receive dowry but not publicly. Similarly, they do not mind organizing party or the feast. Unlike other Sikhs Namdhari Sikhs of these villages do not invite friends and relatives on the occasions of ceremonies of birth, marriage and death formally. They do not get printed cards for inviting the friends and relatives. On enquiring the mode of inviting the friends and

11. Regarding the eating taboo see, Kuldip Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 54.

12. *Interviews*; and also see, Kuldip Singh, *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.

relatives on such occasions we were informed that they orally invite them a day before the ceremonies are to take place. Nevertheless, in actual practice, it has been noticed that on such occasions formal gatherings are arranged. Wherein people of local community and kiths and kins participate.¹⁴

Ideally speaking, the Namdhari Sikhs do not believe in the caste system and arrange their marriages across the occupational castes. They take pride in telling the people that they believe in inter-caste marriages. Nevertheless, in actual practice, it has been found that Namdhari Sikhs belonging to Jat, Khatri, Arora and Ramgarhia castes believe in endogamy. In certain cases, the Namdhari Sikhs of these castes give or take daughters in marriage. However, Mazhabi Sikhs are out-caste so far marriage is concerned. The Namdhari Mazhabi Sikhs do not have any choice but to arrange the marriage of daughters and sons within their own caste.¹⁵

Regarding the marriage there is another practice among these Namdhari Sikhs. In recent times a very substantial number of the old Namdhari Sikh families have stopped observing Namdhari *maryada*. In the Namdhari terminology they are addressed as *Khulah*. The Namdhari Sikhs do not marry their daughters to the sons of *khulah* families. They also take caste and *gotras* (sub caste) into consideration. As noted earlier there are three major sub-castes of Namdhari Jat Sikhs of these villages: Jat Gills in Kakkar, Mann in Muhawa, Nijjar in Bhoiewali. It has been found that the Namdhari Jat Sikhs of these castes settle the marriages of their sons and daughters endogamously. Nevertheless, they do not mind accepting the daughters of *Khulah* families in marriages. The Namdhari Sikhs perform death rituals with certain distinction. First, death, particularly of an aged person, is not treated as occasion of mourning, crying loudly or breast beating as those are totally forbidden. Rather funeral procession of an aged person is taken out to the cremation ground with pomp and show. This practice is not merely confined to the Namdhari Sikhs alone. The people of other faiths also do the same thing in case of the death of the aged person. However, particular practice is that before cremating, the dead person is administered *nam* in his ears and *amrit* is poured into his mouth, a *kanga* (comb) on the head and *kashehra* (short trouser) are placed on the pyre. The pyre is placed directing the face of the dead person towards the stars (*dhruv tara*). For burning, only *dessi ghee* is used. Another distinct feature of the death ritual is that the Namdhari Sikhs do not observe *chautha*.

14. *Interviews*; and also see, Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, Oxford, p. 125.

15. *Interviews*.

Nor do they collect bones. They collect whole ashes in a bag and throw into the running water of the stream or the river. Like the other Sikhs they do not go to Kiratpur or earlier to Hardwar for such rites. Before lighting the pyre they perform *ardas*.¹⁶

Religious Institutions

Excepting Mohawa, there is one place of worship in Bhoiewali and Kakkar, which is known as *Dharamsala*. In Muhawa there are two *Dharamsalas*. The Namdhari Sikhs do not call their place of worship *gurudwara* as it is done by the common Sikhs. The literal meaning of *gurudwara* is Guru's portal or the Guru's abode.¹⁷ For the Namdhari Sikhs Guru's abode is Bhaini Sahib headquarters. It is here that their *Satguru* resides in. It is for this reason that the Namdhari Sikhs call *Sri Bhaini Sahib Gurudwara*. The local place of worship is addressed as *dharamsala*. There are some distinct features of the Namdhari *dharamsala*. Like the *gurudwara*, in the Namdhari *dharamsala* the *Granth Sahib* is placed in the main building. Like the *gurudwara*, main function of the *dharamsala* is to provide the Namdhari Sikhs a meeting place for worship. "This mainly consists of listening to the word of *Adi Granth*, singing them to musical accompaniment and having them expounded in *katha* or lectures and ceremonies. The *dharamsala* also serves a community centre. The Namdhari Sikhs assemble in the compound of *dharamsala* for social, religious and cultural activities. However they hold morning and evening, congregations daily. On all occasions '*Guru ka langer*' is also arranged."¹⁸

In village Muhawa, there is a historical place of worship known as Dera Baba Thakur. It commemorates Baba Kesar Singh ji who was a prominent religious leader. He participated in the independence movement and was a source of inspiration for the Punjabi revolutionaries, like Sohan Singh Bhakna and Sohan Singh Josh.¹⁹ After the death of Baba Kesar Singh his son Baba

16. Interviews.

17. Harbans Singh, *op.cit.*

18. Interviews.

19. This fact has been acknowledged by official documents: *Punjab District Gazetteers*, XXA, Amritsar District, 1914, The Punjab Government, p. 30. The founder of the Gadhar Movement and first president of the Gadhar Party, Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, owned much of his nationalism to a Kuka leader, Baba Kesar Singh of the Village Muhawa. He writes in his autobiographical sketch: "The complete boycott of the British courts, services, postal arrangements, even railways that I noticed among the Namdharis, the non-cooperation movement of the Congress was no much for it. I was in the company of the Baba ji (Kesar Singh) from 1896 to 1906. The fact of the matter is that the life, I am living today is the gift of this noble company", Fauja Singh, *Kuka Movement*, pp. 193-194.

Mangal Singh became the head of this place. Now a days, this *dera* is headed by Baba Shinda Singh ji, grandson of Baba Mangal Singh. Baba Shinda ji is very popular Namdhari leader. He was born in April 1947. At present, he is 59 years old. Baba ji play an important role in terms of organizing religious congregations known as *diwans* or *melas*. In these *melas* thousands of Namdhari Sikhs as well as other people of nearby villages participate. Baba Shinda ji also plays an important role whenever ceremonies like *namkaran* or marriages are celebrated. Besides there are 15 *sevādars* who assist Baba Shinda ji and look after there *dera*. Their basic requirements are met by the *dera*.²⁰

Under the leadership of Baba Shinda ji a *Gowshala* was established in the *dera* in 2001. Approximately there are 500 cows. Maintaining *Gowshala* is treated as a sacred act or religious obligation by the Namdhari Sikhs. As pointed out earlier it was on the issue of kin killing that the Kukas confronted conflict with the British *Raj*. Nevertheless since the beginning of the movement, the Namdhari Sikhs of these villages are observing this tradition. In this context, it may be mentioned here that the Namdhari Sikhs of Bhoiewali organized strong protest against the slaughtering house in the village Dadyal. The local butchers were forced to close the slaughter house. Besides, annual festival is organized at the *dera* of Namdhari Sant Mangal Singh. The *dharamsala* in Kakkar village is looked after by Sant Surjit Singh ji. He is *sodi*. *Sodi* is that Namdhari Sikh who observes Namdhari *maryada* very rigidly.²¹ He is 70 years old. In Bhoiewali, the Namdhari *dharamsala* is looked after by Sant Manjit Singh ji. Sant Manjit Singh is 43 years old. He took the *sewa* of this *dharamsala* from his father who came to this village before partition of Punjab in 1947. There is an old well in the complex of *dharamsala*. It is said that people of this village constructed their houses around this well to save themselves from natural calamity. Beside, a religious festival is held on the day of *sangrand* annually in this village.

Briefly speaking, in the twentieth century, or onwards when various socio-economic developments have taken place in the society in terms of industrialisation, urbanisation and rapid growth of education, it is difficult for an individual or groups to follow a conservative approach regarding religious practices. These developments have also brought a liberal attitude among the Namdhari Sikhs towards observing *rahit* and *maryada* because it is quite difficult for them to cling with the traditional customs and rituals.

20. His family comprises 15 members. One of his sons has been sent abroad by 'Satguru' Jagjit Singh.

21. *Interviews*.

IDENTITY POLITICS OF NAMDHARI SIKHS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

*Babusha Maingi**

As in the other parts of India, in Punjab the society has been divided both vertically as well as horizontally; vertically along caste and some extent and horizontally along communal and rural-urban cleavage. The vertical and horizontal division of the Indian social structure show that the majority and minority are both fictitious. Practically, every independent political community, there exist groups whose religious beliefs differ from those of other minority or majority groups. Vital and essential differences in faith and practice do exist among them. In otherwords, religious pluralism exists within every political community of the world, and however, the major cleavages in the state has been the religio-political one.

There are several internal cleavages in the social structure of the Punjab which are important for their implications for the state's politics. One of the more important of these is religion. However, like all other communities in India, the Sikhs are also internally segmented. They are divided by caste, class and rural-urban cleavages. Moreover, no society or group, however, is monolithic and uniform. The Sikhs too are not homogeneous community. Several heterogeneous groups i.e. Nirmalas, Udasis, Nirankaris and Namdharis are segments of the Sikh community. Their social and political interests are not identical to the interests of the mainstream of the Sikhs. The vested interests of these sectarian groups force them to realign with these regional as well as national political parties. In this paper, little attempt has been made to the political orientations and attitude of the Namdhari Sikhs of Punjab before and after independence.

The changed territorial boundaries as a result of the partition created a new kind of identity politics. The state now consists almost entirely of Hindus and the Sikhs. In 1951, the Sikhs formed about 35% of the total population of the state, while the Hindus represented the majority with 61 percent.¹ The majority status of the Hindu population as well as the increase

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1. Ashutosh, "Electoral Politics in Punjab : 1966-2004", *Journal of Punjab Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring, 2005, pp. 11-127.

in the percentage of the Sikhs was a new thing. Sikhs were in majority in Ferozepur, Amritsar, Kapurthala, Bathinda, Jullundhur, Ludhiana, Batala and Fatehgarh Sahib and were dominating and in minority in other five districts.² Sikhs of these districts and princely states came to represent more than half of the total population.³ Merger of PEPSU in 1956 further consolidated the Sikh population for the first time in their history they themselves concentrated in a large contiguous territory. In terms of the 1961 census, the Hindus formed 63.7 percent of the population, the Sikhs 33.3 percent, and the remaining religious groups only another 3.0 percent.⁴

Since the inception of the Kuka movement, numerically the Namdhari Sikh remains a microscopic Sikh sect. It was during the second half of the 19th century, that their number arose to more than 3 lacs. However, when the Kuka movement was crushed by the British government, their numerical strength multiplied to 13,068. In the post-independence period, the Namdhari leadership claims that the number of Namdhari Sikhs was more than 4 lacs.⁵ Nevertheless, the relevance of the Namdhari Sikhs cannot be appreciated in terms of its number rather, they made a niche in both regional as well as national politics during pre and post-independence period.

Traditionally, the Namdhari Sikhs have been the only sect sizeable enough to be involved in politics. Factually, their history itself has had the effect of evolving them in politics.⁶ Baba Ram Singh, according to Namdharis was the first man to evolve non-cooperation, boycott and 'Swadeshi' as political weapons for a paramilitary organization. This expression of the Namdhari Sikhs continued till the second decade of the 20th century, when they joined the Congress party and responded to the non-cooperation movement with zeal.

2. *Census of India*, 1951, VIII, Part II-A, pp. 298-300.

3. Krishan Gopal, "Sikh Politics (1947-57 A.D.)", *Punjab History Conference, Proceedings*, Punjabi University, Patiala, pp. 246-257.

4. Baldev Raj Nayar, "Punjab", *State Politics in India*, ed. (MyRon Weiner), Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1968, pp. 435-502.

5. For detail, see, Nahar Singh, *Gooroo Ram Singh and the Kuka Sikhs : Documents 1863-1871*, Amrit Book Co., New Delhi, 1965, pp. 36-37; Joginder Singh, *A Short History of the Namdhari Sikhs* (Manuscript of forthcoming book), p. 87.

6. A.S. Narang, *Storm Over the Sutlej : The Akali Politics*, Gitanjali Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983, p. 21.

In the beginning of the 20th century, Namdhari community achieved a definitive external differentiation and its members have developed a subjective awareness of a distinctive identity in politics (or in the political ground). Moreover, self determined political status of Namdhari Sikhs articulated by the Namdhari Darbar, which has officially adopted the position that Namdhari Sikhs are a distinct identity group in religion and politics well. According to Kenneth Jones, "the Punjab was divided into a series of aggressive organizations, each possessing its own ideology, each containing a unique sense of identity."⁷ These communal identities took shape in the form of the Punjab Hindu Sabha, Punjab Muslim League, the Chief Khalsa Diwan and the Akali Dal. Subsequently, the new self awareness heralded an era of awakening among the Namdhari Sikhs in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Lot of literature was produced both literary and journalistic, by the Namdhari writers which glorifies their patriotism and teachings of the Namdhari Gurus. The Namdhari writers, namely Nidhan Singh Alam, Inder Singh Chakarverty, focused their attention on understanding fundamental Sikh doctrine and recording the true Sikh tradition.⁸ Much of the efforts were aimed at searching old literary sources and evaluating historical documents into Namdhari context. The desire to preserve their heritage was the product of socio-cultural revolution which had shaped the Namdhari Sikh community in modern times.

It is axiomatic truth that there is a common philosophical base between the Namdhari Sikhs and Hindus. Their identical position, reflected through their literature as well as from their artifacts. Attributes of Namdhari mission (or sect) can be located in the Hindu tradition. Their headquarters came to be known as *tap-asthan*. The names of buildings, namely *Goalmandir*, *Samriti Mandir* and *Ram Sarover*, which was dug on the suggestions of Namdhari Guru Ram Singh, very much close to the Hinduism. It is believed that during the third epoch Sri Ram Chandra, the Hindu God, used to perform *havan* here.⁹ In addition to this, the word

7. Kenneth Jones, *Arya Dharam : Hindu Consciousness in the 19th Century, Punjab*, Manohar Book Service, Delhi, 1976, p. 315.

8. Sant Nidhan Singh Alam, *Jug Paltaoo Satguru*, Namdhari Darbar Sri Bhaini Sahib, Ludhiana, 2006, pp. 12-13; Also see issues of '*Satjug*-1939, 1942'.

9. It is paid, while its construction was in progress, a triangular shaped *havan* pit was found here alongwith the burnt coals. The place was named also Ramdaspur and pool was called Ramsar. Dalip Singh Namdhari, *Gatha Sutantrata Sangram Di*, Namdhari Darbar Sri Bhaini Sahib, 2002, p. 17; also see, Jaswinder Singh (ed.), *Sant Santokh Singh Bahawal Krit Satguru Bilas*, No. 1, Namdhari Darbar, Sri Bhaini Sahib, 2002, p. 16.

'Dharamsala' instead of Gurdwara continues to be used till today. However, like Hindus, Namdhari also being, use *Vikrmi Sammat*, Ayurveda, Varni System, vegetarianism and most important like Hindus they believe in living Guru. Subsequently, Namdhari scholars attempt to prove that Guru Gobind Singh was a staunch follower of Devi Durga and also used to perform *havan* for strength. He himself declared Hindu.¹⁰ The Namdhari Sikhs also argued that Guru Gobind Singh had gained knowledge from the Hindu Epics, *Upnishda*, *Puranas* and from the ancient Indian philosophy. Subsequently, during the freedom struggle of India many nationalist and revolutionary leaders also eulogized the patriotism and nationalism of Satguru Ram Singh and advocated that the Kuka movement was a harbinger of the freedom struggle. This cultural identification received a boost when the Hindu Mahasabha and Congress recognized their cultural identity. This Hinduised image of Namdhari Panth (or developments) clearly showed that the Namdhari Sikhs tried to project and adjust their identity within the Hindu framework till from the advent of the sect. These ideological similarities continued till after independence when Satguru Partap Singh and Satguru Jagjit Singh also used to exclaim "*Qaum Saddi Hindu hai Mazhab Sada Sikh hai*"¹¹ (We are from a Hindu nation and bear Sikhism as our religion).

The issue of distinctive Sikh identity was raised and debated in the official circle in the 1850s. It was initiated by Trumpp first in 1859, afterwards Macauliffe and Griffine subsequently. This then, was further overblown by the contemporary administrator C.H. Payne.¹² The introduction of communal electorates under the Minto-Morley Reform of 1909, the Montague-Chelmsford Reform of 1919, the Government of India Act of 1935 and the Cabinet Mission Scheme of 1946 were based mainly on the principle of the communal division of Indian people, resulted in communal organization vieing with the other in consolidating its position.¹³ The demand was partly conceded by the British when the Montague-

10. Pritam Singh Kavi, *Beete Diya Para*, Vol. 10, Pritam Singh Sahit Parkashan, Delhi, p. 419 (here after *Beete Diya Para*).

11. Beant Kaur, *Lal Ehi Ratan*, Vol. 5, Arsi Printers, Delhi, 2005, pp. 242-43; also see, *Beete Diya Para*, Vol. 10, p. 419.

12. Joginder Singh, "Bhai Kahn Singh's Hum Hindu Nahin : Polemic or A Social Documents", *Journal of Sikh Studies*, Vol. XIV, No. 1, Department of Guru Nanak Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, pp. 65-74.

13. Kamlesh Kumar Wadhwa, *Minority Safeguards in India : Constitutional Provision and their Implementation*, Thomson Press (India), United Publication Division, 1975, p. 25.

Chelmsford Act of 1919 accorded separate communal electorate to the Sikhs. This reward only due to the rising of communal or identity consciousness among a new generation of educated Sikhs at the beginning of the 20th century. Prior, Sikhs demanded the control of the Sikh gurdwaras should lie with the *Panth*, as a whole. This religious crusade also took on a political complexion. Consequence of the Akali movement was that, it gave birth to the Shiromani Akali Dal and religion-based politics of the Akalis. Eventually, different Gurdwaras in the Punjab came under the control of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 1925. Akalis themselves believed that, both (SGPC and SAD) as the political and religious custodians respectively, of the *Panth*. However, the SGPC Act of 1925 defined Sikhs in a manner which excluded the sehajdhari and include only the Khalsa and non-Khalsa Sikhs became second grade members of the community.¹⁴ This Act helped the Akali Dal emerge as a dominant Sikh political party and the SGPC became "a formidable platform" from which to reach the Sikh community. It became a sort of parliament of the Sikhs. The SGPC placed in the hands of Akalis and occupy all the resources of the Gurdwaras. Although the Akalis elaborated and further institutionalized Sikh identity, especially the symbols of martial bravery and historic traditions, they added little to the intellectual discussion that had gone before.¹⁵ Furthermore SAD perceives itself as the "one exclusive manifestation of the corporate will of the Sikh community and denies to a non-Akali Sikh any right to speak for the *Panth*. Moreover, the tension generated by doctrinal differences, most important controversy on the issue of living Guru and the unresolved relationship between Sikhs and Sikh sub-sects in the second decade of the nineteenth century.¹⁶ For all these developments, more conventional media, i.e. *Khalsa Samachar*, the *Khalsa Advocate*, the *Akali-te-Pardesi*, the *Khalsa Sewak Punjab* and *Panth Sewak* were also utilized.¹⁷ In these circumstances, Namdhari Sikhs nevertheless, felt more insecure about their identity. The policies of government were more directly effected

14. Manju Subash, *Rights of Religious Minorities in India*, National Book Organisation, New Delhi, 1988, p. 220.

15. N. Gerald Barrier, "The Sikhs and Punjab Politics 1882-1922", (ed.) Paul Wallace, Surinder Chopra, *Political Dynamics and Crises in Punjab*, Department of Political Science, G.N.D.U., Amritsar, 1980, pp. 502-541 (hereafter *Political Dynamics and Crises in Punjab*).

16. *Ibid.*, p. 302.

17. Paul Wallace, "Religious and Secular Politics in Punjab : The Sikh Dilemma in Competing Political System", *Political Dynamics in Crises in Punjab*, pp. 1-44.

the community interests. At the same time, Sikh institutions had sparked growth and an outburst of energy. Factions and competition persisted within the Sikh community. Identity crisis for Namdhari Sikhs was the major question. At such a critical juncture Namdhari politicians and leadership agreed that a consolidation of resources and leadership was necessary and trying to create a platform on which Namdhari Sikhs could stand in the electoral politics, so the Namdhari Darbar tried to consolidate their identity with Congress Party during the freedom struggle. They appreciated the liberal and secular tradition of the Congress and eulogized the contribution of their leaders for promoting secular polity.¹⁸ The Namdhari leaders firmly believe that only Congress could protect and promote the socio-cultural and political interests of their community. However, Congress also accepted their independent socio-cultural identity because of their vested interests. This is the only reason that Congress nominates Namdhari candidates in Lok Sabha as well as in Rajya Sabha.¹⁹ But after a span of time, in Sirsa politics Namdhari Sikhs no longer stand with Congress due to some cleavages with Congress on certain issues. So, they support non-Congress candidate in Sirsa constituency, this made force Namdharis to review their relations with Congress party.²⁰ In 1959, on the occasion of *Holla Mohalla* where Master Tara Singh, Kehar Singh and some other Akali leaders attended the Diwan, the Namdhari leaders took decision that they should oppose Devi Lal in the interim elections.²¹ However, a section of Namdhari Sikhs comprising Seth Gurbax Singh, Pritam Singh Kavi and Pandit Gopal Singh tried their best to persuade the Namdhari Guru to revise his attitude towards the Congress party. They were convinced that it was only with the Congress support that the Namdhari community could make progress.²² However, with few differences Namdhari Sikhs remained active in Congress politics. Kartar Singh Sokhi from Sirsa, Sant Pritam Singh from Jammu and Sardar Sulakhan Singh were elected as members of metropolitan councils of

18. *Beete Diya Para*, Vol. 2, p. 208.

19. Namdharis succeeded in getting tickets for Atma Singh and Teja Singh for the Lok Sabha elections held in 1952 and Maharaj Nihal Singh was nominated as a member of Rajya Sabha.

20. Tara Singh Anjan, *Sahib Guni Ghera*, Jantak Press, Delhi, 1991, pp. 164-165.

21. *Wariam*, February 1980, p. 29.

22. Tara Singh Anjan, *Sahib Guni Ghera*, p. 163; *Wariam*, April 1980, p. 12.

Jammu and Delhi respectively. Inder Singh Namdhari became a Speaker in the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly.²³ On the regional level also, the Namdharis were elected *Panches*, *Surpanches* and Chairmen of block samities. Their good relations have also been to better understand, when the names of Sulakhan Singh, Kartar Singh Sokhi and Baldev Singh Chana were sent for the Delhi Corporation Election. Mohinder Singh Kanpur and Gurcharan Singh Gorra were suggested for UP Legislative Assembly elections. Six more names were suggested for the Punjab Assembly.²⁴ To run such political activities, the Namdhari Guru appointed reliable intermediators namely Seth Tarlok Chand and Sardar H.S. Hanspal. Hanspal became a member of Parliament and also president of Punjab Congress Committee.

Subsequently, in electoral politics, the Namdharis not only identified themselves as big voters of Congress in local and state levels but also they supported the Congress in the other states too. They supported Himachal Congress in the 1980's General election.²⁵ Kehar Singh Namdhari contested as a Congress candidate. Apart from Congress, Namdharis also identified themselves with Communist Party. It is already known that Communists had old association with Namdhari Sikhs during the peasant movements in 1930's. In fact, some of the Namdhari writers have come from the communists background. Communists appreciated their patriotism during freedom struggle, but due to some ideological differences i.e. the former believe an ideological worship of god, whereas the latter are atheists, they cannot join their hands. Factually speaking, Namdhari leader Satguru Partap Singh declared that they would assist Communists but would not become a part of their party.²⁶

In Punjab the Namdhari Sikhs, a small but an important minority community desired "adequate" representation in the Block, District and as well as in the provincial politics. So, they made themselves an effective force in the provincial politics. The problem arises when SGPC and SAD categorized Namdhari and other sects as out of peripheral to the power structure in the state. But in 1960s the new development popularly described as the Green Revolution which helped in the growth of capitalist farming in Punjab helped the Namdhari Sikhs also to be take part in the

23. *Beete Diya Para*, Vol. 10, pp. 356-57.

24. *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, pp. 376-383.

25. *Ibid.*, Vol. 10, p. 342.

26. *Wariam*, Feb. 1980, p. 22.

competitive arena for material benefits, status and power. These developments further, helped or may be a cause of the emergence of the Namdhari leadership, which was more interested in land reforms and agricultural development and thus recognized themselves, as the greater utility of capturing power in the secular political system of the state. This leadership committed to maintain their separate independent identity and status.

This economic change led to a social change also. The attendant increase of political opportunities in the context of expanding public space, and consequent demands related to the sectarian requirements. Moreover, their political and economic interests also seek opportunities to make consensus with regional Akali party on certain issues. They were very much aware about the Akali Dal's competitive capability in Punjab politics. So that they wanted to accrue economic and political benefits from the Akali government. On the other hand, Akali Dal themselves analysed, that Namdharis' social and ideological association with relatively richer section of rural society, who are also demarcated socially Jats. One of the emerging necessity of attending to the Namdhari Sikhs, whose population in Punjab is, as high as compare to other sects, particularly in rural areas, that is extremely important for the Akali Dal's competitive capability in Punjab politics.

Undoubtedly, the Namdharis and Akalis had have some basic similarities. They both admired the teachings of the great Sikh gurus. In the same way, the Akalis also saluted the glorious role played by the Namdharis in the freedom struggle. Similarly, they had have been the protagonists of Punjabi language and culture. The Namdhari Sikhs asserted that they too participated in the Akali agitation. However, it was the Communal Award 1932, and Guru Nanak Nam Leva Conference in 1934 at Bhaini Sahib, which brought both the Namdharis and Akalis united on the common platform.²⁷

The Namdhari and Akali Sikhs both claim themselves to be the representatives of Sikhism. In spite of these commonalities they could not stand on the common electoral platform. Because there are political as well as religious factors working behind their political rivalry. Theologically speaking, the Namdhari Sikhs and the Akalis cannot go together because the

27. Tara Singh Anjan, *Namdhari Sikhs : A Brief History*, Arsee Publishers, Delhi, 2007, p. 72.

former do not fit into the *Maryada* of SGPC.²⁸ The Namdhari Sikhs believe in living Guru whereas, the Akalis believe that living Guruship came to an end when Guru Gobind Singh vested Guruship in the *Adi-Granth* in 1708. Besides, the structure of Namdhari beliefs and practices related to birth, marriage and death differ from the *maryada* of SGPC. In fact, the Namdharis cherish their distinct identity and are not willing to compromise with it.

In spite of these differences, the Namdhari Sikhs supported the Akalis on the issue of Punjabi Suba Movement. The Namdhari Guru, with an objective to resolve the matter, met Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India.²⁹ Being a protagonist of the Punjabi language, the Namdhari Guru made a passionate appeal to the Hindus that they should recognize Punjabi language as their mother tongue.³⁰ He advised them to resolve the linguistic issue amicably.

The communal harmony was again disturbed on 13 April, 1978, when a clash took place between the followers of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and Bhai Randhir Singh's Akhand Kirtani Jatha with the Nirankaris at Amritsar. It was an armed clash in which eighteen persons were killed. Consequently, on 24 April, 1978, Nirankari Guru, Baba Gurbachan Singh was killed. Since, like Nirankaris, the Namdharis too had faith in a living Guru. This crisis directly hit the psychology of the Namdhari Sikhs. They criticized the matter severely. The newspaper, according to *Nava Zamana*, viewed that "the Namdharis might be the next victim of Akalis." The Namdhari leader Jagjit Singh expressed his sentiments strongly that SGPC was not a single body who represent all the Sikh community. Above all, it had no right to define the meaning of a 'Sikh'. The Namdhari Darbar took

28. A Sikh is any person who have faith in one God, the ten Gurus and their teachings and the *Adi Granth*. In addition he or she must believe in the necessity and importance of *amrit* (initiation) and must not adhere to any other religion. *Encyclopaedic History : The Sikhs and Sikhism*, (ed.) H.S. Bhatia, S.R. Bakshi, Deep & Deep Publications Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1999, p. 59.

29. *Nava Zamana*, 23 August 1961, p. 3.

30. During this period, The Communal Response of the Hindus in the far of their renouncing Punjabi as their mother tongue and declaring themselves as Hindi speaking in both the 1951 and 1961 Census. By disowning the Punjabi language, they made it the language of the Sikhs and communalized the very issue of language; Sucha Singh Gill and K.C. Singhal, "Genesis of Punjab Problems", *The Punjab Crises : Challenge and Response* (ed. Abida Samiuddin), Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1985, pp. 37-51.

initiative to inform the Punjab as well as the centre government that whenever they took decision about the representatives of Sikh shrines or religious places they must keep in view the different schools of disciples of Guru Nanak. Consequently, on 18th June, 1978, a convention was organised by all political parties at Jalandhar. About 50 Namdhari Sikhs also attended this convention. The presence of Namdharis in this meeting showed their minority fear from the majorities i.e. the Sikhs. They also expressed their grief in this convention on the fact that the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takhat, Amritsar had pronounced a *Hukamnama* to the Sikh people to boycott the Namdharis.

During the course of the Sikh militancy, the Namdhari Sikhs opposed the communal patterns and Khalistan Movement. they expressed their regret over the terrorist activities. They made an appeal to all the communities to maintain co-operation and national integration. They applauded Indira Gandhi for her initiative to send five Sikhs to settle the dispute and also tried to resolve the problem of terrorism.

Apart from these fluctuating relations, the Namdharis' and Akalis' perception towards vote politics could not be changed. The secular and liberal system of education, industrialization, urbanization, growth of the spirit of rationalism, and most important understanding of politics in new perspectives are some factors due to which both became close to each other. But, inspite of modernization in a democratic framework never free man from religion. Religion is not abolished but its role changes. There is freedom of religion and not freedom from religion. The vital realities of culture, language, religion and their socio-political as well as economic interests deliberately force the Namdhari Sikhs to correspond political activities. They, thus, both directly and indirectly compel the government to strengthen their identity or status. Consequently, the separate political ideology of the Akalis and Namdharis took a turn for reconciliation. Some of the senior leaders of the Shiromani Akali Dal tried to build up political links with the Namdhari Sikhs in the second half of the 20th century. Because the Congress-Namdhari rapport got set-back on the issue of construction of monuments in the names of the Namdhari Martyrs. In response to it, the Namdharis denoted a piece of land to the Gurdwara of Tarn Taran. Badal government paid reverence to the holy town of the Namdharis, Sri Bhaini Sahib and Raian declared as holy places. Sardar Parkash Singh Badal established a memorial trust to construct a Kuka Martyrs' Memorial at Malerkotla, arranged the tax-free sale and purchase of

commodities being used in the referred memorial. For this, purpose, Badal government also established a Bhaini Sahib Development Board for Namdharis and gave a grant of Rs.50 lacs. Besides, SGPC revived the practice of nominating the Namdhari Sikhs on its executive body. The Government of Punjab, also established a Chair in the name of Satguru Ram Singh to promote the research. Moreover, 150th year anniversary of the Kuka Movement was ordered to be celebrated on the national as well as state level in 2008. In addition to this, the Akali Government took decision to add Chapters on Namdhari history in the prescribed books for the undergraduate and post-graduate students. Above all, the Namdhari leaders have succeeded in getting the title, that Kuka Martyrs of 1871-72 are the freedom fighters.

On the whole the Namdhari identity politics also be observed as the politics of opportunism' or dual politics. In the early 20th century, the Namdhari Sikhs appeared close to the Gandhian idealism and were seen as the guiding principles. The manifestation and expression of their religion was predominantly in a Hindu idiom. In this sense, having common identification and indivisibility they become closer to the Hindu organizations. Due to their cultural identity and patriotism Congress Party also recognized them as first freedom fighters of India. But their hidden agenda also force to support Shiromani Akali Dal, for the community benefits. But their ideological differences still remained.

In post-independence, according to Namdharis, it was obligatory on their part to participate in politics as a group. Their attempts to construct coalition of various parties in its efforts to mobilize political support, in terms of political concessions, assurance of protection of the sect, economic benefits and patronage. No single party can run the state in this coalition era this understanding made Namdhari groups to balance the conflict of various parties. So that, they showed their interests with SAD. The changing expression of this new leadership in post-independence period was on rediscovering and preserve the cultural identity, which is sought to be protected through the only a political alignment with sufficient safeguard.

TABLIGH MOVEMENT IN MEWAT

Aijaz Ahmad*

Tabligh is an Arabic word which means, "to deliver (the message)" and in other words "to make Islam's message known to people" and Tabligh Jamaat (Proselytising or Conveying Group) is a Muslim missionary and revival movement. It claims to revive those duties, which they consider as the primary duty of the Muslims. It was founded in 1926 by Maulana Mohammad Ilyas Kandhalvi¹ (1885-1944) in Mewat and put forward the slogan '*Aye Musalmano Musalman Bano*' (O Muslims! Be Muslim). He made his headquarter at *Banglewali* Mosque at Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi. Although it was a massive movement which needed a lot of funding but it does not solicit or receive donations. It is funded by its own members who operate it in a very efficient model; it is taken care of by its senior members. It is a free-floating religious movement and very much close to the traditional forms of Islam. It detests politics and does not involve itself in any issue of socio-political significance. Even in the controversies relating the future of Muslim minorities in India, it has remained apparently unconcerned. The political programme of the *Jamaat* has helped it to operate freely and without official hindrance. But Maulana Ilyas never criticised Islamic groups actively engaged in politics. On the contrary he maintained extremely cordial relations with Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni of Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind (anti-British and pro-Indian National Congress group) and Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi who led the pro-Pakistani faction of

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1. The ancestral home of Maulana Ilyas was in Jhanjhana, in the district of Muzaffarnagar, U.P. His father Maulana Mohammad Ismail, after death of his first wife, married in the family of Mufti Ilahi Baksh Kandhalvi. So Kandhla became a second home to him. His childhood was spent in maternal grandfather's home in Kandhla. He took his education from Gangoh and stayed with Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi for about nine years. There after Maulana went to Deoband, where he studied from Maulana Mahmoodul Hasan. He started his teaching from *madarsa* Mazahirul Uloom of Saharanpur. (Qamruddin Zakir, *Mewat Se Tablighi Kam Ki Ibtida*, Nuh, 2005, p. 25) (Urdu) (Hereafter cited as Zakir).

Deoband School.²

The members of the Tabligh form groups under *Amirs* (group leaders) who roam from village to village and town to town and stay in mosques from where they preach and converse the message of *Allah* and Prophet. They use a book named *Fazail-e-Amaal* which mainly consists of the *Hadith* (the traditions of the Prophet) written by Maulana Mohammad Zakaria, as a preaching material. They try to inspire everybody to do various acts as directed by the Prophet and refrain from doing misdeeds and call others to follow the true path of Islam.

From around the 10th century onwards Mewat attracted many great Sufi saints e.g. Syed Salar Maswood Ghazi, Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia, Shaikh Moosa, Shah Chokha, Miyan Raj Shah, Qutbuddin, Akbar Ali, Khwaja Ajmeri, Khwaja Mehrauli etc.³ These Sufi saints illuminated the light of Islam in Mewat region. The Meos and other communities of Mewat accepted Islam and followed it till the long time. But as the time passed the Muslims of this region drifted away from the Islamic rules and principles and adopted innovations that too mixed with the Hinduism. They used to celebrate Hindu festivals and fares with pomp and show. Their customs were predominantly Hindus even their names were like Hari Singh, Dhan Singh, Chand Singh, Sammu Singh, Jal Singh, Lal Singh etc.⁴ They were Muslims without Islam. On the other side the emergence of Tabligh was also a direct response to the rise of such aggressive Hindu proselytizing movements such as *Shudhi* and *Sangathan*. They tried to reconvert those

2. Martin E. Marty, R. Scott Appleby, *The Fundamentalism Observed*, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Chicago, 1995, pp. 518 & 521.

3. Zakir, p. 17.

4. *Gurgaon District Gazetteer*, Chandigarh, 1983, pp. 100-104. Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi in his book *Maulana Mohammad Ilyas Aur Unki Deeni Dawat*, has quoted from *Alwar District Gazetteer*, 1878, London, that the Meo Muslim gods are the same as those of the Hindus. They also celebrate many festivals of the Hindus. For them the Holi festival is as important as Muharram, Eid and Shab-e-Barat. Like Holi they also celebrate Janam Ashtami, Dussehra and Diwali. They also invite Brahman Pundits to write "*Peeli Chithi*" and to fix the date of the marriage. They generally adopt the Hindu name except Ram and prefer the surname as Singh. They also worship the Flag of Syed Salar Masood Ghazi at the time of Shab-e-Barat.

(Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, *Hazrat Maulana Mohammad Ilyas Aur Unki Deeni Dawat*, New Delhi, 2002, pp. 76-79) (Urdu) (Hereafter Quoted as *Deeni Dawat*).

people who had embraced Islam in the past. Maulana Ilyas believed that only a gross root Islamic religious movement could counter it.

Although Tabligh was founded in 1920s Mohd. Ilyas but it was enrooted by his father Maulana Mohammad Ismail much early in the beginning of the later half of the 19th century in the *Banglewali* Mosque at Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi. About him it is stated that one day at the prayer time he came out of the mosque in search of the *Muktad* (companion). He saw that some Muslim labourers were going to Delhi for the search of work. He called them for prayer and after prayer he preached them some verses from Holy *Quran*. He also enquired about them. Maulana assured them to give their daily wages if they study Islamic education in that mosque. They agreed and Maulana kept them engaged in their lessons. They were the Meos of Mewat. Maulana fixed their scholarship equal to their daily wages. It was the starting of the *Madarsa* Kasiful Uloom and those Meos were the first students. After that some other Meos also joined the *madarsa*.⁵

His son Maulana Mohammad who carried his father's mission of teaching Islamic Theology succeeded Maulana Ismail. At his time the strength of the students rose from 25 to 30. But Maulana Shah Mohammad Ilyas, the younger brother of Maulana Mohammad while teaching at Saharanpur visited Mewat and met the Mewati Muslims who had not offered prayer even once in their life because they did not know how to pray. In the early 1920s he prepared a team of young *madarsa* graduates from Deoband and Saharanpur and sent them to Mewat to establish a network of mosque, *maktab* (primary school) and *madarsa* throughout the region. But he soon realized that the *madarsas* *Ulema* trained in the Deoband tradition were simply reproducing their prototype. By this method, only children were benefited and the skilled people both young and old were untouched. He resigned from the *Madarsa* Mazahirul Uloom and settled in Hazrat Nizamuddin, New Delhi in *Banglewali* mosque. Then Maulana Ilyas started roaming and invitation method whose name he gave "*Tahrik-e Tajdeed Dawat-wa-Tabligh*" (Movement for renewed Proselytizing and Invitation). He stated that this would be a moving *madarsa* or *Khanqah* or school or hospice.⁶ He also stated that the real aim of this movement was to correlate the Muslims with the complete literary and practical management of Islam. He also cleared that this method of roaming and invitation is the

5. *Deeni Dawat*, pp. 44-46.

6. Zakir, p. 26.

beginning phase or ABC of the curriculum of the movement. Maulana Ilyas also asked ladies to help their gents in their religious work and ease them from the burden of the domestic work.⁷

Tabligh movement, which is popularly known as Tabligh Jamaat, is not a registered body nor has it enrolled membership. It comprises some people from skilled and unskilled masses from the gross root level. They request the Muslims to offer prayer, to observe *roza* (fast) and adopt Islamic way of life. They also encourage the people to spend three days or more in their company. They also argue that it was the way of the Prophet.⁸ When a *Tablighi* returns from his journey, he should try to implement what he has learned in his life. He should also invite others towards it so that they can also spiritually benefit from it. Daily *Taalim* (which means teaching and learning) is recommended to be done at home so that the women folk and children can also benefit from what the men have learnt. However, there is a *Jamat* for women called a *Masturat Jamat*. Unlike the men, the women stay outside the mosque in the house of a well known *tablighi* worker following full *sharia'h* rules with *parda* (veil) and learn and also teach the women of that locality who may come to join them. Men do not join the *Masturat Jamat* as they are separate and stay in nearby mosque. Tabligh *Jamaat* has mainly focused its works on the following three points :⁹

(i) **Removal of Innovations** : The whole Mewat region was full of innovations or *bid'at*. The people of Mewat had considered these innovations and local customs like *Urs*, *Mela*, *Teeja* and *Gyarahwan* as the Islamic traditions. There were the biggest hurdles for the Tabligh preachers. But due to their day-night work, they became successful to a great extent to enlighten the people of Mewat.

(ii) **Mentally preparing the people for Islamic principles and Tabligh** : The people were encouraged to leave their homes for three days or more to learn the principles of Islam like *Kalima* and *Namaz* etc. They were also advised to go to distant places to meet their Muslim brethren and invite them to follow the Islamic rules.

(iii) **Adopting the way of Quran and Prophet** : Maulana Mohammad Ilyas and his followers started *madarsas* in the village and city

7. Mohammad Manzoor Nomani, *Malfoozat*, Maulana Mohammad Ilyas, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 26 & 101 (Urdu) (hereafter quoted as *Malfoozat*).

8. Hashim Amir Ali, *The Meos of Mewat*, New Delhi, 1967, pp. 43-44. At one place Maulana Mohammad Ilyas said not to ask people for sparing three or five or seven days; they should be told that this is the way and how much they will work, they will get (*Malfoozat*, p. 93).

9. Zakir, pp. 7 & 8.

level. In this process, Madarsa Moinul Islam was established at Nuh in 1923 and thereafter Madarsa Hafizul Islam at Ferozepur, Thirka, Madarsa Asharful Imdad at Mandikhera and Madarsa Misbahul Uloom at Singar were established. It was thought that without Islamic education the real Islam cannot enter the minds of the people and the *madarsas* were the permanent solution of all the problems facing the Muslims of Mewat from the centuries.

The works on above three points made this movement more successful and the people joined this movement on mass level. Maulana Ilyas asked Tabligh members to restrict their preaching on six points only. These points were generally called six numbers. These are as follows :-¹⁰

1. Kalima (There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger) : The people should follow in full conviction of faith, belief and oneness of Allah. This is expanded to mean that a creature cannot do anything without the will of Allah and Allah can do everything without the creature. The complete success in this world and hereafter is only achieved in following the way of life shown by Muhammad and every other way led to failure in this world and hereafter.

2. Namaz (Prayer) : What has been professed in the *Kalima* is to be proved by offering prayers at the appointed hours of day and night.

3. Ilm and Zikr (knowledge and hymning the glory of Allah) : The true religion can not be followed without knowledge of *Quran* and *Hadith* (tradition of Prophet). One must spend some time everyday in hymning His glory.

4. Ikram-e-Muslim (kindness and respect for the Muslims) : Whatever is due to others should be given to them. It also includes respecting ones elders and showing kindness to the younger. This idea was to bring back the various factions and different classes of the Muslim society to the fold of the real Islamic brotherhood.

5. Ikhlas-e-Niyat (purity of intention) : The performance should be in accordance with the Commands of Allah with the sincere intention. All good actions should not be for fame or materialistic gains.

6. Tafrigh-e-Waqt (sparing the time) : The Muslims are required to spare their time for travelling in groups, exhorting the people to lead their life according to the principles mentioned above.

10. Shamsuddin Shamsh, *Meos of India*, New Delhi, 1983, pp. 184 & 185.

The first challenge was from the Shudhi Movement of the Arya Samaj. Their activities were widespread in Mewat. They were in the groups of 10 to 12 preachers who roamed the whole of Mewat and tried to convert the people according to their mission. In its response some people of Mewat requested Maulana Ilyas to visit Mewat in order to thwart the activities of Arya Samaj. He quickly responded and along with Syed Husain Ahmad Madni, Mufti Kifaitullah etc. arrived in Mewat and after a long conversation with the *shudhi* workers he became successful to counteract the opponents. According to the Tabligh workers, they learnt enough from them specially the group preaching from village to village. The Tabligh workers adopted it completely in their own mission.¹¹

The other challenge for the Tabligh Movement was from its own Muslim community. Actually Tabligh work is reformation of the society as well as religion and in Mewat both were polluted and innovated. Muslim society was not ready to give up their customary traditions and so called religious malpractices. The innovations or *bid'at* was fully developed in their mind. These people opposed the Tabligh tooth and nail and were not even ready to listen their appeal. They abused and teased the Tabligh workers openly. They did not even spared Maulana Ilyas. During one of his missionary tours in Mewat, a peasant upon whom he impressed the importance of leading a religious life once hit him with a stick. The Maulana, a mere skeleton fell on the ground and collapsed. When he regained his consciousness he said, "look, you have done your job, now would you let me do my job and listen to me for a little while?" According to a Tabligh worker Abdullah of Dewla Nagli (Mewat), the Tablighis were teased with the following poem :¹²

*"Saarp Ne Chhori Kanchli, Bhit Ne Chhoro Leo,
Barkha Mandi Par Gai, Jab Se Hue Maulvi Meo,
Hue Maulvi Meo, Piron Ki Kare Hain Gilla,
Bhar Bhar Kunda Khain Lewen Na Kisi Ki Salla,
Nakti Unki Khusni, Mathe Unke Syah,
Jaise Chhuhra Ka Fatiha, Aise Unke Byah."*

(The snake left its skin, the wall left its plaster,
the rain became scant when the Meos became Islamic scholars
(Maulvi),

11. Zakir, pp. 44 & 45.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

these Meo scholars criticized the saints (Pirs),
 they eat full of vessels, don't take others advice,
 their trousers are short, their forehead is black,
 just as mini functions of the sweepers, so are their weddings).

The members of the *Jamaat* were encouraged by saying that if they happen to be abused by the people then don't desperate because it was the work of the Prophet. They were also taught that in this way if they face the misfortunes and troubles then they consider them as Divine benevolence.¹³ Slowly and gradually the mentality of the people started to change due to the day night effort of the Tabligh workers. The Meo workers of the Tabligh *Jamaat* were in much strength in Mewat who had extended their full support to Maulana Ilyas and later on his successors. They were well versed in *Quran* and Islamic principles, called "*Miyanji*".¹⁴

In 1926, the first group of Tabligh *Jamaat* arrived in Mewat under Maulana Khalil Ahmad of Saharanpur. This group with the assistance of the *Miyanjis* arranged a conference at Nuh town. This was attended by thousands of people with much enthusiasm.¹⁵ In this conference the people were requested to disown the Hindu customs and follow the Muslim practices and spread the network of Tabligh in the whole of Mewat. First Tabligh *Jamaat* of the Meos was also convened and toured the areas of Sohna, Taoru and Nagina. Maulana Ilyas also came and spoke on the occasion of *Juma* prayer in all the three places.¹⁶

On 2nd August 1934, Maulana Mohammad Ilyas arranged a *Panchayat* at Nuh which was attended by around 107 Chaudharies of Mewat. In this *Panchayat* he laid emphasis on the importance of Islamic principles and their full implication in the daily life. Regarding this he prepared 15 points as a *Panchayatnama*, which was duly signed by all the presentees with full assurance and acceptance.¹⁷ This *Panchayat* was considered as the milestone and everybody started to take part in the Tabligh work.

Another chapter was added in the progress of the Tabligh work when a three day conference was organized at Nuh from 28th to 30th November, 1941. This conference was attended by 25 thousand people who came all

13. *Malfoozat*, p. 27.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

16. *Deeni Dawat*, p. 92.

17. *Zakir*, p. 48.

across Mewat and around one thousand people attended from the outside Mewat. It was ever biggest gathering which the people of Mewat had never seen in the past. Maulana Ilyas gave many impressive speeches along with his companions. Maulana Husain Ahmad Madni was also one of the speakers. In this convention *Jamaats* were convened and sent to Delhi, U.P., Karachi etc.¹⁸ Sayed Abu Ala Maududi, the founder of Jamaat-I-Islami, paid a glowing tribute to spectacular success of Maulanas' effort in Mewat and elsewhere in India and described the Tabligh Movement as a major step towards the Islamisation of Indian society.

From that very time the Tabligh Movement never seen behind and from Mewat it spread to the whole of India and now covering almost entire world. Now it has become truly a global Islamic movement. It has spread to 150 countries of South East Asia, Middle East, Africa, Europe, North America etc. It has an active following estimated to be around 70 to 80 million devout followers. In 1993 one million Muslims attended its Annual International Convention at Raiwind near Lahore from 94 countries. This convention has become the second religious congregation of the Muslim world after the *Hajj*.¹⁹

The Tabligh Movement or *Jamaat*, which was started only due to the Mewat problems and spread to the whole of world, is purely a non-political organization. Tabligh workers generally avoid political and controversial debates and interaction with media. Their reply to any embarrassing question is always evasive. They also reject any modernistic interpretation of Islam. Their congregation in mosques with common boarding and lodging on individual expenses projected them an egalitarian organization. Purifying the religious practices among the common Muslims including deep faith towards Islam and promoting unity among them were the avowed objective of Tabligh Movement. The effort of its founder Maulana Ilyas was for total commitment to people professing Islam with a view to inspire them to undertake actions in their life for sure rewards by Allah. But the minus point of the Tabligh is that instead of orientation of the Muslims for just society their members believe in preaching only for adherence to Islamic pattern of life of the Prophet's era. Tabligh *Jamaat* hardly has any relevance to the solution of the socio-economic problems of the Muslim masses. But its appeal to simple rank and life of common Muslims for establishment of "Kingdom of Allah" has an inspiring effect.

18. *Deeni Dawat*, pp. 142-144.

19. *The Fundamentalism Observed*, p. 459.

SOME BRITISH WRITINGS ON CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN PUNJAB: A CRITICAL EVALUATION

Amandeep Kaur*

This paper is an attempt to understand the perspective of British-administrators-cum-writers related to the cooperative societies in British Punjab with focus on their perceptions in terms of the emphasis on the establishment of the cooperative societies, types of societies, rate of interest charged by them, the caste and class composition of members, position of the members on the basis of education, impact of these societies on the social customs, attitude of societies towards financial problems of the members during natural calamities, assessment of the functioning of these societies and causes of their failure.

This study is based on the critical examination of five contemporary works viz.: M. L. Darling's *'The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt, Rusticus Loquitur, Wisdom and waste in the Punjab Village*. Anstey Vera's *'The economic development of India'* and Darlington W.s *'Economic life of a Punjab Village'*. In order to have comparative understanding of the perceptions of contemporary writings and the recent research, the book by S.D.Gajrani *'Peasant movement in Punjab'*, Sukhdev Singh Sohal's *'The Making of the middle classes in the Punjab (1849-1947)'* and two research papers on *'Co-operative credit in the colonial Punjab (1904-47)'* and *'The Co-operative Movement and the peasantry in the Punjab (1904-47)'* have also been examined.

The contemporary writings depict that an unofficial society on cooperative lines was started as early as 1891 at *Panjawar* in *Hoshiarpur* district for controlling the common land for the benefits of the co-sharers. It functioned till 1922¹ on the recommendations of the famine commission 1901, *Lord Curzon* appointed a committee under the chairmanship of *Sir Edward Law*. The report of the committee recommended the cooperative credit societies as a solution to cope with the debt problem. The cooperative societies act was

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1. M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, Oxford University Press, London, 1930; p 18.

passed in 1904.² The cooperative societies were called banks in Punjab.³

Indigenous cooperation was a feature of Punjab village. Although there was no cooperative society in some villages but even then cooperation was provided in arranging marriage functions and at the time of death ceremonies. Even at plough time and harvest, if anyone had more work, it was managed with the help of the others. People used to help each other at the time of need. The cooperative societies were both agricultural and non-agricultural as well as credit and non-credit. Non-credit societies included Better Living Societies, Arbitration Societies, Societies for breeding of cattle, for sale of produce, storage of fodder or grain and society for education. The best type of cooperative society for the purpose was Thrift and credit society.⁴ A new form of credit society named Crop Failure Relief Society came into existence in 1891. The produce was sold to the society and the proceeds were credited each members' account.⁵ Any ten persons could be registered as cooperative society in the same town or village. Basic principles were thrift, self-help and mutual-help. The main object was to replace the unproductive debt by a productive one and to provide the cultivator with a sound and well controlled system of credit. Reduction of the debt was the main object of the co-operative department in the Punjab.⁶

These studies observe that a few *Mohammads* forbade taking *usury* so strictly that even they refused to take any part in a cooperative bank when they found that bank was going to take interest on loan.⁷ It is also noticed that in non-colony tract different societies on the religious basis did not exist as it was the case with colony areas where different societies for *Hindus* and *Muslims* were functioning.⁸ These studies further reveal class and caste composition of members of cooperative societies. The Mullana bank was a remarkable concern with 92 members drawn from a dozen different castes i.e. *Rajputs, Arains, Saints, Gusains, Jogis, Potters, Washermen, Weavers, Water-carriers, Oil-pressers, Barbers* etc. In *Sharkot* tehsil bank was being

2. M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, 1925, reprinted 1977, pp.228-236.

3. M. L. Darling, *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village*, Oxford University Press, London, 1934, p. 3.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 241-244.

5. M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, p. 5.

6. M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, p.2.

7. M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, p. 186.

8. M. L. Darling, *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village*, p. 8.

run by Sials.⁹ In *Jajpur* near *Haryana* a weaver's cooperative society was working.¹⁰ There were three banks near *Baghapurana*, one was of *Zamindars* and two were of sweepers. Bank of sweepers was based on *Sikh* and *Christian* religion. The study also notice that two banks, one for village servants and the other for village masters was also functioning. In *Asarpur*, cooperative society for children and women was working successfully. Members of women societies were hospital nurses, servants, teachers and peasant's wives. Children's society was a first lesson in handling money. This was a new and miniature affair. Every work was done by children themselves. In *Kalbar Kahar* two banks of *Awans* and *Janjuas* were functioning. 90% of their members had military connections. Widows were also enthusiastic in becoming members of the societies.¹¹

These studies also notice the standard of education of the members of these societies. There were over 16000 cooperative societies with an average of 32 members each. In 1930, only 13% members could read and right. In *Zira* tehsil, 97 % members were illiterate.¹² In *Muzaffargarh*, the most of the members of 30 years old bank were more or less educated. They knew nothing of their bye-laws and did not posses a copy.¹³ It was a wonderful thing to see the bank at *Sharkot* tehsil, where only treasurer was literate but all other members were illiterate. In *Jalandhar*, the customers of the banks were mostly illiterate. A sum of Rupees 7 crores was advanced to about 5,00,000 members of whom only 1 in 7 could read and write. Some of them even could not count.¹⁴

Coming to rate of interest, these studies reveal that a lower rate of interest was charged by these societies. The Usual rate of interest was 12.50 %. It was also analyzed that remedy for compound interest was corporate credit. The rules of societies about rate of interest were flexible. These were reduced at time of natural calamities. Floods destroyed *Rawal* village. People were helped by cooperative societies and loans were sanctioned at 7%. In drought policy to advance was different from the policy of money-lenders. Later advanced freely in first year, tightened bags in second year and in third

9. M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, p. 88.

10. Darlington W., *Economic life of a Punjab Village*, George Allen, London, Undated, p. 96.

11. M. L. Darling, *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village*, pp. 8, 51, 79, 120-124.

12. M. L. Darling, *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village*, pp. 120-123.

13. M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, pp.235, 276.

14. M. L. Darling, *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village*, pp. 67, 324.

year to open them only so far as was necessary to keep old clients in lash. Banks only the most vigorous had advanced anything material during last year and many had advanced nothing in first two years. Intelligent cooperators did not like them. According to them loan for plough, bullock, seeds and food should not be stopped. Loan should be given in anticipation of rains. In its absence repayment should be indefinitely postponed.¹⁵ Better living societies helped the people when plague was raging. The society got everyone to evacuate the village and be inoculated as well. The problem of sanitation had been satisfactorily solved.

These studies further reveal that due to cooperative societies the waste was diminishing and the thrift was growing. Better living societies were sufficient evidence that expenditure on marriages were decreasing. The expenditure on jewelry was cut down. There was also evidence to raise the age of marriage. These societies reduced marriage expenses by 50 to 75 %. Demand for better living societies had increased in order to control expenditure on marriages, people remarked at Mukerian, 'Alone we can do nothing' but together we can do everything'. People wanted these societies in order to save the ruinous expenditure of conventional marriage. Due to Better Living Societies, expenditure on boys' marriage were reduced to rupees 70 from rupees 500 and girls' marriage cut to rupees 300 as against rupees 800 earlier. In *Toba Tek Singh*, 50 better living societies were working successfully. Reduction in expenditure on jewelry by people compelled the gold smiths to move to cities.¹⁶ These societies also attempted for health and sanitation insisting upon *manure pits, wat-bandi, veterinary and human first-aid, cattle breeding, and encouragement of village games and avoidance of waste*. They also insisted on cleaning teeth daily and washing clothes weekly. With the development of Arbitration Societies, disputes were settled by local arbitrators instead of going to courts, hence avoiding litigation expenses. All sort of cases related to women, crop, debt, insult, hurts, supply of water, etc. were settled by these societies. Stress was also laid down on thriftiness which encouraged the habit of saving. There were around 300 societies for the help of village servants. The cooperative societies tried to satisfy all rural needs but in towns only 9% population came under these societies.¹⁷

These studies find that societies helped only those people who were already thrifty. Those who were already sunk in debt and could not afford to

15. M. L. Darling, *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village*, pp. 67, 167, 188.

16. M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, pp. 5, 61, 111, 207, 343.

17. M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, pp. 241-244.

deposit anything in these banks had no means of help at all.¹⁸ These studies further investigated the system of dealings adopted by these societies. These societies dealt both in cash and kind. In *Jalandhar* and *Hoshiarpur*, 75% dealings were in cash. But in *Gurdaspur*, *Sialkot* and *Amritsar*, it was 45 to 55%.¹⁹ These studies observe the impact of cooperative societies on business of money-lenders. The movement attacked them through the village banks. Cooperative societies worked as commission agents. Members used to deposit 2.50% or 5% of their crop with the society. The produce was sold and the proceeds credited to each member's account. In this way Crop Failure Relief Society encouraged thriftiness.²⁰ In several villages, members of the cooperative societies had altogether stopped their dealings with the village *bania* on account of the facilities offered by the co-operative societies. The chronic evil of finance by the village *usurer* in *Sind* received a severe blow.²¹ As a result of cooperative societies, dealings with money-lenders ceased. The magic of cooperation lies in the fact that it substituted for the money-lender's demoralizing system. The credit was controlled and borrowings restricted.²² The money-lenders opposed this movement but the powerful support of government, landed gentry and members of the educated class, however, held their opposition under the cover.²³

Lastly, coming to the causes of failure of these societies, it is observed that easy access to money was resulted in wastage of money. One of the causes of the failure of the society was lack of feed back of loan.²⁴ In early years, it faced problems like careless loans, heavy arrears of interest, fictitious payments, occasional dishonesty, and general apathy on repayments. Due to personal problems peasants were not paying. Weaknesses of the movement were : inexperienced Registrar, inadequately trained staff and uneducated members.²⁵ The opportunity for dishonest dealing was innumerable and embezzlements frequently occurred. Capital of the banks was often mixed up with the own by the treasurer.²⁶

18. Darlington W., *Economic life of a Punjab Village*, George Allen, London, Undated, p. 96.

19. M. L. Darling, *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village*, p. 18.

20. M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, p. 5.

21. Anstey Vera, *The Economic Development of India*, Longmans, London, 1936, p. 199.

22. M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, p. 237.

23. Darlington W., *Economic life of a Punjab Village*, George Allen, London, Undated, p. 27.

24. M. L. Darling, *Wisdom and Waste in the Punjab Village*, pp. 120-123.

25. M. L. Darling, *The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, pp. 228-236.

26. M. L. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitur*, p. 312.

Thus British studies perceive this institution as important organization in financial structure of colonial Punjab. They consider it as vital instrument in reducing rate on interest charged by the money-lenders, reduction in expenditures on marriages, funerals and jewelry. To some extent, it also helped in eradicating social evils like gambling, drinking, sale of daughters etc. There is identification of the various classes and castes involved in dealings of cooperative societies. These studies also highlight the rate of interest, mode of repayment and effect on the institution of money-lending. Government was trying to control indebtedness but neither famine nor diseases ever induced the government to reduce the taxes or the land revenue.

In this sense these studies became not only pioneer to understand the working of the cooperative societies during colonial period but also provide certain perspectives on the issues which later on proved very crucial to the political economy of the British set up. The recent researchers explored the issue in terms of economic and socio-political ramifications. Dr. S. S. Sohal, highlighted the basic difference in the functioning of cooperative society and money lenders in terms of rate of interest, formalities regarding issuing the loan and system of repayment.²⁷ These researchers explored the dominance of the landlords in the functioning of cooperative societies. They regarded them as cows to be milked.²⁸ These studies also reveal that the dealings of the society were in cash only.²⁹ Both moneylenders and co-operative societies were equally cruel at the time of recovery. Indebtedness and poverty enhanced under British rule as a result of birth of new class of moneylenders i.e. Agricultural money-lenders, which was the by product of these societies.³⁰

Thus it is clear from the above analysis of the British administrators that they held the illiteracy of population and untrained staff responsible for the failure of cooperative societies. It was the duty of the British government to arrange for the better human resources for the successful running of these societies. British writers failed to convince the government for not being able to bring such change. They appreciate the British government for establishing these institutions. Although these societies stimulated the consolidation of land

27. S. S. Sohal, *The making of the middle classes in the Punjab*, ABS Publications, Jalandhar, 2008, p.76.

28. Sukhdev Singh Sohal, *Cooperative Credit in Colonial Punjab 1904-1947*, PHCP, 1995, p. 165.

29. S. D. Gajrani, *Peasant Movement in Punjab*, Madan Publishers, Patiala, 1985, p.13.

30. Sukhwant Singh, *Cooperative Movement and the Peasantry in the Punjab*, PHCP, 1992, pp 157-162.

holding and encouraged the permanent improvement in agriculture. Malcolm Lyall Darling laid stress on the need of literacy of members and guarantee by sureties on the loans to members. It was an appreciable effort on the part of British government but it could not be considered as whole hearted effort. Government enacted this act seriously but became non-serious during its implementation. British administrators-cum-writers did not reflect on the future socio-political ramifications of this institution. This movement could not become mass movement because urban enlightened population did not join it. Spread of this movement in rural areas shows that rural population was considered more loyal than the urban middle class by British administrators. Indian scholars attacked on the negative role of government in developing these societies in all parts of the nation. Paradoxically the government never tried to make it a success.

CUSTOMARY LAW AND CHILDREN IN THE COLONIAL PUNJAB

Vijay Lakshmi*

Custom is to society what law is to the state. And when the state accords the customs formal recognition, they get converted into customary laws. Customary law is composed of a large body of rules observed by communities evidenced by long usages and founded upon pre-existing rules sanctioned by the will of the community.¹ Before the advent of the British, religious scriptures, customs and usages had the force of law. These customs varied with region, religion, social background, level of economic development and even the political order. As early as 1781, customary laws and personal laws were taken into consideration and *pandits* and *maulvis* were appointed as interpreters.² Hindu law based on its texts such as the *Smritis*, *Shrutis*, *Dharamshastras* and Muslim law on *Shara* was given importance.³ The East India Company was relatively dependent upon unwritten and undefined customs as the basis of adjudication. The insistence on a uniform system pre-selected certain customs from a myriad of others, to become customary law. Colonial society thus, had two parallel regulating authorities—the formal legislations upheld by the State and the informal system of customs and personal laws.⁴

The Punjab was one of the last territories to be annexed by the British in 1849. In pre-British times, there was no written record of customs prevailing among various tribes inhabiting the Punjab. The *Panchayats* or *jirgas* enforced these customs which were enshrined in the 'Unexpressed conscious' of the people.⁵ When the British set up the Board of Administration, Dalhousie, the Governor General, assured people of

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1. Sripati Roy, *Customs and Customary Law in British India*, p. 11.
2. Janaki Nair, *Women and Law in Colonial India : A Social History*, New Delhi, 1996, p. 24.
3. M.P. Jain, *Outlines of Indian Legal History*, Bombay, 1972, p. 599.
4. Uma Chakravarti, *Rewriting History : The Life and Times of Ramabai*, p. 134.
5. W.H. Rattigan, *A Digest of Civil Law for the Punjab*, 14th Ed., The University Book Agency, Allahabad, p.vi.

upholding 'native institutions and practices'; and that popular institutions would be 'improved and consolidated'.⁶ The Punjab Civil Code, which aimed at collection of rules to bring uniformity in judicial procedure, came into force in 1853.

In 1859, Punjab was constituted into a regular province under a Lieutenant General⁷ and in 1865 the judicial procedure, came into force in 1853. In 1872, the Punjab Laws Act was passed; section 5 of the act stated 'in questions regarding inheritance, special property of females, betrothal, marriage, divorce, adoption, guardianship, minority, bastardy, family relations, wills, legacies, gifts, partition or religious usage or institution, the rule of decision should be any custom of anybody or class of persons, which is not contrary to justice, equity and good conscience and has not been declared to be void by any competent authority.'⁸

A majority of agricultural population did not follow Hindu or Muslim law but custom. Revenue authorities were entrusted with the task of preparing records of tribal and local customs. The work was started in 1864 under Princep and many settlement officers were appointed to assist him. Efforts were directed towards the completion of records of tribal customs under the authority of Settlement Officers who compiled a *Rvaj-i-am* at every settlement.⁹ These records were authoritative statements of customs of various tribes. Village headmen and other influential people of all the important tribes were asked questions regarding customs which were explained to them and their answers were recorded. They were also required to quote cases or instances in support of their answers. Manuals or English Codes of Customary Laws in accordance with the *Rivaj-i-am* were issued by the authorities for each district and stood on much the same footing as *Rivaj-i-am* itself as evidence of custom and were to be preferred to the vernacular one in case of conflict between the two.

Children are a very crucial part of a society. In this category the reflection of future of a nation is clearly visible. Although customary law is not directly related to the children but when we closely examine its provision, it seems that almost all the provisions directly or indirectly have an impact on this young category of society; for example, gender relations,

6. Jain, *op. cit.*, p. 292.

7. Punjab Laws Act, 1872.

8. W.H. Rattigan, *A Digest of Civil Law for the Punjab*, 14th Ed., p. vii.

9. C.L. Tupper, *Punjab Customary Law*, Vol. I, Government Printing Office, Calcutta, 1881, p. 16.

when we see betrothal, only the girl is dependent, infanticide practices in relation to early marriage, adoption, when girl child was never adopted as heiress to property and inheritance where the daughters have most of the time, no right of inheritance in their father's property (Female is always under tutelage, an unmarried female is under the guardianship of her father or his heirs. A married woman is under her husband's guardianship; a widow is under that of her deceased husband's next heirs). However, the society has not spared its hold on boys by betrothing and marrying even them, at a very young age, not bothering about their education and future. Thus, in the customary law, we can trace the hold of society on the position of children.

However, we have some limitations when we study or analyse customary laws;¹⁰ the subject 'child' is itself a very wider term, when we discuss customary provisions for children. Children are children for parents for their whole life'. There is no definite age limit as such, but for legislation which is made by the state generally has a particular age group. The term specifically is used boy or girl; daughter or son instead of children. Here children are considered in relation, not as an independent entity and their human rights are reserved by their parents. So to begin with the customary law, we may discuss social issues which define the social status of children in the family – some are here, as Betrothal, Child's marriage, Adoption, Inheritance, Guardianship and Illegitimate children.

1. Betrothal : The important points for discussion in betrothal are, who has the control of betrothing, age of the child, who takes initiative, boy's side or girl's side, breach and its causes and its impact.

Who Betroths : The father of the girl had the first right to betroth; after his death the mother or the elder brother. In the eastern parts, the girl's mother could effect betrothal consulting with agnates or father's place is generally taken by the brother if of age or by the uncle. But in the western parts the sequence is (i) Elder brother, if of age, (ii) The father's father, (iii) Father's brother, (iv) Mother, (v) Remoter agnates, or the two latter, should betroth within the tribe. But among the lower castes the mother has full right.

Age : The age at which betrothal may be effected is not fixed, however in eastern Punjab the Gujars of Rupar put the lowest age of betrothal at 5 weeks, many tribes putting the maximum age at 40 years. In the west, Belochs never defer it till 16. But it is not below five years. In

10. Volumes of Punjab Customary Law.

Kaithal the Rajputs assert that betrothal cannot take place before the age of 10. In the western Punjab as in the Dera Gazi Khan 12 is the usual age and 5 is lowest. Some say, for example in Peshawar, betrothal may be affected at any age but girl must be 2 years younger than the boy. Further, Muhammadans as a rule betroth at a later age than Hindus e.g. Hindus in western Punjab, Jhelum, Shahpur betroth from 5 to 12 while Muhammadans from 10-15. In Lahore Jats and Arains betroth from 4 to 6, Rajputs from 12-14 and Dogras from 5-20 years. Thus, we see there is a tendency of early betrothal among higher castes. In Muzaffargarh betrothal is common among well-to-do at a very early age.

Another point in betrothal is among Muhammadans that if the parties are first cousins they betroth before 2 or 3. In Ludhiana, when betrothal is *pun* or *satta watta* where no money consideration takes place, the parties are 5 to 6 years old.

Initiative : Initiative in betrothal also depicts the right of a girl or wife in the society. In the eastern districts among the Hindus, girl's people take initiative. But among the Mohammedans' boy's people take initiative. In the western parts for both the Hindus and Muslims girl's people and especially the father of the girl takes initiative. However, there are exceptions such as for Muzaffargarh, Dera Gazi Khan, and Peshawar boys people take initiative. These varying customs afford a striking illustration of the position enjoyed by women in different parts of these Provinces and amongst the different religious communities and tribes.

In the *watta satta*, both can take initiative in betrothal whereas if the girl is being sold, the boy's father takes initiative.

Breach in Betrothal : Breach is mainly physical (leprosy, impotence, blindness or mortal disease in either party). Immorality on the part of the girl is also a valid cause. The contract is considered much more binding on the girl's relations than on those of the boy.

2. Marriage : When we examine the customary provisions related to marriage in the period under study the points are consent to marriage, endogamy, which is indirectly related to the propensity of parents to marry off their daughters in their early age and prohibited degrees of marriage.

Consent to marriage : As a general rule a virgin, whether of age or under it, can not contract a valid marriage without the consent of her guardians. This is equivalent to saying that for a marriage the consent of the same person is necessary as for a betrothal and in Shahpur there is a general feeling, even among Muhammadans, that a girl's marriage, if

contracted without her guardian's consent, should be held invalid. Among the Balochs, in that case, the guardian has a claim for compensation against the husband. Although it is valid by Muhammadan Law if the girl be grown up, all the Jats and Sayyids of tahsil Dera Ghazi Khan, say they follow Muhammadan Law, which allows an adult woman to contract a valid marriage. While Awans, Gondals and Rahja say that a woman can consent to her own marriage without her guardians' assent. There are many instances where the adult girl did not take their guardians assent.

Endogamy : As a general rule a wholly legitimate marriage can only be contracted within the caste, but this rule is disqualified by so many important exceptions that it is almost doubtful whether it can accurately be called general. In the next place, the characteristic rule of hypergamy, which is so widespread in the Punjab, permits a man to take a bride from a lower caste, but forbids him to give a daughter to a husband of that lower caste.

For prohibited degrees the general custom is to avoid the *angas* and arms, commonly called the four *gots*, i.e., 1st that of the father or one's own, 2nd that to the mother's father and 3rd that of father's mother, and 4th that of the mother's mother.

However, there are many instances where the marriages were solemnized in the same *got*.

3. Adoption : When we examine adoption, the main points are, who can adopt, prevalence of custom, share of the adopted son in his adoptive father's property, as well his natural father's property.

Who is adopted and who can adopt : Adoption of a son as heir is often permissible, but a girl is apparently never adopted as an heiress to property of any kind. But the presence of a daughter's son is no bar to an adoption. Adoption of a son is only permissible to a man, who has no male lineal descendant capable of inheriting but if his only son or male descendant (e.g.) an out caste, a man may adopt.

As a general rule the adoption of an only son, or of an eldest son, or a brother is not prohibited. In some cases it is asserted that an only son cannot be adopted, but this may surely be regarded as a counsel of perfection, and the only reason for the prohibition would be the natural objection of a man to part with his only son.

It follows from the rule, that a man who has one son cannot adopt another; that a man who has adopted a son is debarred from adopting a second. Further, in Gujrat an adopted boy cannot himself adopt.

There are no general restrictions as to the age or condition of the boy adopted. He is usually minor and unmarried, but it is rare to find any disqualification attaching to the absence of these conditions.

As a rule nothing disqualifies a man from adopting a son, unless he be spiritually dead to the world. 1) Thus a bachelor, a widower or a man who is blind, lame or impotent, may adopt 2) unless he be a minor 3) the right of widow to adopt a son as heir to her deceased husband is exceedingly limited. In Kaithal the right is denied in toto, and in Indri, it is only admitted when the husband has given her permission before the brotherhood, or by his written authority. Further, there is another limitation that the adopted son must be of the adopter's caste or tribe, or indeed chosen from his own agnates. This is the principal restriction on the adopter's freedom of choice, the others being few and confined to certain tribes and localities. A man can adopt a son in the presence of his relatives, and bring him up in his own house, in every respect as his legitimate son; and among the Bhabras, though any boy of the caste may be adopted. Male relatives within certain degrees are preferred.

There are many instances where daughter's son was adopted as heir. As well as there are many instances where a bachelor adopted his nephew and an only son was given in adoption.

Prevalence of custom : Nevertheless adoption is very rare even among Hindus, while among Muhammadans it is often alleged to be non-existent. In Jehlum, however, adoption is practically unknown, even amongst Hindus. In Shahpur the custom of adoption is virtually confined to Hindus and the Muhammadan Awans. In Muzaffargarh it is being gradually introduced, but only among Hindus. In Dera Ghazi Khan it does not exist among the Baloch, except perhaps among those of Sangarh.

Custom or Ceremony : The formalities required to make an adoption valid are few and simple. Adoption is affected without any elaborate rites based on the idea that the boy is to be re-born in the adopter's family. It is known as *god-lena* or 'taking into the lap' when the boy is an infant. In Shahpur an adopted son is termed *putrela* by Hindus, and to adopt it *putrbana*, 'to make a son'. These are apparently the only technical terms associated with the custom.

Rights of adopted son : All Hindus say the adoptive father can give what share he pleases to his adopted son (a reply open to question), and all of them (except those of one village, Kuri, and the Bhabras) say that the adopted son in all cases retains his rights over the estate of his natural

father (the dissentients saying this is only the case in the event of his natural father having no other sons).

Broadly speaking, adoption transfers the boy from his natural father's family to that of his adopter, so that he may become the latter's son and succeeds to his estate, wholly; or if a son be subsequently born to the adopter, to a moiety of it. If more than one son be born to the adopter the rule of *pagvand* or *chundavand* will apply according to the custom of the family, the adopted boy being treated as the only son of one wife and thus, getting half the estate when the rule of *chundavand* applies. (1) *Mauza Gil*, Tahsil Ludhiana—Nihal Singh, Jat Gil, adopted his brother's son, Bhola, and had a son, Rola, born to him subsequently; Bhola and Rola succeeded in equal shares.

On the other hand, a boy adopted into another family generally loses his rights of inheritance in his own or natural family, but retains a kind of reversionary right therein. However there are many instances where boy inherited his natural father along with the adopter.

Revocable or irrevocable : Among Hindus the conception is that an adoption is the transfer of a boy from one family to another by a kind of fictitious birth, which is as irrevocable as a physical birth. Hence, an adoption is always irrevocable among Hindus, whereas among Mohammedans it has not that character. Thus, among the Jats of Lahore an adoption cannot be cancelled, but the Rajput and Muhammadan Arains say it can be cancelled if the adopted son is disobedient. (1) Among the Muhammadans Awans of Sangarh tahsil, Dera Ghazi Khan, the adopted son inherits nothing if natural son be born after his adoption; but the other Muhammadans and Hindus, who allow adoption say an adopted son shares with natural sons born before or after his adoption. In short, the Muhammadan idea of adoption is rather that of a conditional gift than of the transfer of son.

Palak : This custom is all the more curious. We find an interesting custom of informal adoption; the *palak* or boy is merely adopted in the sense that he has brought up in his adoptive father's house, either because the latter had no children, or from other motives of affection or charity, differing essentially from other motives of affection or charity, differing essentially from the formally adopted son. This custom is well established among Hindus.

4. Inheritance : The heirs to the land of a deceased man are : (i) his sons, (ii) other male lineal descendants, (iii) his widow, (iv) his father's widows or his son's widow.

Among the sons the general rule is equal partition, by the rule of *pagvand* or *bhaibant*. But to this rule there are three classes of exceptions : First is the rule of *chundavand* or equal division between the groups of sons by each wife. Second is primogeniture, in the English sense is confined to families which may be classed as formerly ruling or semi-independent. There are good many instances among various tribes of the eldest son receiving an extra share.

Daughters : As a general rule, among Hindus, in the east of Punjab, daughters have almost no right of inheritance in their father's property, because on marriage, which is an indispensable object in a girl's life, she passes out of her father's family and enters that of her husband. However, for Muhammadans the daughters have far larger rights than they have among Hindus. But in the western Punjab and trans-Indus daughters stand in a better position among Hindus, doubtless owing to Muhammadan influence.

When we analyse the daughter's right to inherit the property of his father, we come across three things: one is, when the girl is strictly excluded from inheritance, or given maintenance in the case she is unmarried. Second is the case when the girl has right to inherit, when there are no collaterals left for inheriting, and third is when she remains unmarried for her whole life or a married daughter lives in her father's house after her marriage (*ghar jawai*), in some cases even for default of sons, orphan daughter also inherit. Mussammat Hurmat daughter of Maula, was married but her *doli* was not sent out. She succeeded her father (Ludhiana). Virgin daughters are however, preferred to collaterals.

For the first instance, in Kaithal even a *got-bhai* or collateral, however, remote, would exclude daughter; in Ambala Jat and Gujars adopt the same practice. In Ferozepore and Ludhiana, (Hindus) daughters never inherit.

Lastly, when the girl is given right to inherit, on being living unmarried, or living with her father's house after her marriage, or default of a son or orphan daughter. Jhelum-a-daughter can hold the property but only till death, in Peshawar the rule is that unmarried daughters inherit in the absence of male descendants. For Sialkot, Jhelum, Rawalpindi, Multan, Muzaffargarh, and Kangra there is a such type of feeling.

In Gujrat all Muhammadans (except Rajputs in Kharian and Phalia) say that if a sonless land-owner puts his daughter with her husband in possession of the land, either verbally or by deed, then the daughter and her

children will, after his death, become its owners. In such a case the collaterals' consent is not required, more especially if the son (in-law) has been put in as a *ghar-jawai*.

The step son : The step-son, i.e., the son of a widow by her first husband, has as a rule, no rights whatever in the property of his mother's second husband. In Ambala, Ludhiana, Ferozepore, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Sialkot, Shahpur, Muzaffargarh, this rule is followed. They are, however, given maintenance or minor portions for e.g. 1/20 share of the property as in Sialkot. In Dera Gazi Khan 1/4 following Muhammadan Law. Mainly this was the actual position of a step son in his father's property throughout the Province.

While in the hills the son born to a woman in the house of a second husband is regarded as his own son, among the Kanets and lower castes, whoever the actual father may have been; such a son is called *ronda* in Kullu and succeeds like any other son, but it is not clearly laid down that a *pichhlag* (or step-son born before the second covertures) would succeed his step-father. But this privilege of the widow receives an extraordinary extension in the right conferred on her children by a mere liaison, provided that they are born in the late husband's house. Thus, among the Gaddis of Kangra such a child succeeds without reference to its real father, 'born within the four walls' of the deceased husband's house.

5. Guardianship : The main points of discussion on guardianship are who is the guardian of the minor after the death of the father. What are his or her rights regarding betrothal or disposing of the property of minor? Whether the minor is liable to pay the valid debts of his father?

The rights to the guardianship (i) of the person (ii) of the property of a minor are usually vested by custom in the same hands, but as to who that person ought to be. The customary law is singularly vague. In cases when no guardian has been appointed under Act VIII of 1890, it is often of considerable practical importance to know who is the lawful (as distinguished from legal) guardian of a minor, and the question not infrequently arises in criminal cases of taking from lawful guardianship.

Who is guardian : As females have seldom a right in the immovable property so after the death of her husband, the right of guardianship did not rest on her in the colonial period. The first right resides in the father who can appoint a guardian before his death, then near collaterals (maternal relations excluded), mother and the elder brother. In some cases otherwise.

In the colonial period mother was not preferred, for guardianship of the person or the property of the minor. But it is not completely shunned as in some tehsils the mother was made the guardian of both person and property until re-marriage. But if the widow is remarried guardianship may be transferred.

Alienation of the minor's property : A guardian may mortgage or sell moveable or immovable property for the payment of the deceased father's debts, for payment of government revenue due on the land and for maintenance of the minor. Other tribes say the property can be mortgaged also to meet the expenses of the minors' education or marriage expenses or for object directly advantageous to the ward. On proof of absence of necessity for transfer or of disadvantage to the ward the transfer becomes void. The property of the ward may be leased by the guardian for any period not extending beyond the date on which he attains his majority. However a guardian can not gift the property of his ward.

The minor is liable to pay the valid debts of his father or for payment of Government revenue due on the land. There are many instances of such type in customary law, when the debt is paid to the creditor by the minor.

There are many instances where chief court gave its decision keeping in view, the welfare of the minor.

6. Illegitimate Children : The points to be discussed under illegitimacy are : who are illegitimate children and who is responsible for their upbringing?

Who are illegitimate : Illegitimacy is generally connected to where a marriage has taken place between parties whose marriage either by reason of relationship or previous marriage, or difference of caste etc. – the offspring of such a union may be considered legitimate or not. The offsprings of a slave girl (*kanizak*) may also be considered illegitimate.

Rights of the illegitimate : Illegitimate children have no rights to inherit the property of natural father. Such children have no claim to maintenance on the property of their fathers. Among those tribes in which the *Karewa* or *Chadar andazi* form of marriage is allowed the sons or offspring of such marriage inherit exactly as do the sons of a regular marriage.

Who is guardian of illegitimate? : The mother or her relatives have the preferential claim for the guardianship of illegitimate children (*Customary Law of the Gujrat District*, Vol. IX. Lahore, 1922, pp.18-19).

Conclusion

Whole discussion on the customary law and children points out towards their status in the family. The concept of child in the colonial period was that, children were not specified as a special category; rather they were treated as mini adults when we see their early betrothal as well as early marriage. Girls were treated harshly than boys for this purpose. Girls were never taken in adoption. Boys were taken as heir and there are many instances where the boy is taking his adopter's as well as natural father's property. While for inheritance among brothers the *chundawand* or *pagvand* etc. customs were followed but for girls again their rights are restricted by collaterals if not by brothers. Step sons were also excluded. Due to the passing of guardian and wards Act 1890 minor was many a ways protected by the state because the welfare of the minor was given the prime importance instead of customary guardian. For illegitimate children customary law is however, harsh, but there are many instances where illegitimate children were legitimized by the natural father and they inherited equally.

THE ABDICATION OF MAHARAJA RIPUDAMAN SINGH OF NABHA: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

Jatinder Singh*

Ripudaman Singh alias Maharaja Ripudaman Singh Malvindra Bahadur¹ alias Gurcharan Singh,² all these names belonged to one person i.e. Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha who ascended the throne of Nabha on December 20, 1911, at the age of 28 years. Ripudaman Singh son of Maharaja Hira Singh of Nabha was born, as noted in the daily diary of the Nabha Darbar on 22nd *Fagun* 1939 BK., 4th March, 1883 at 12:00 noon.³ Maharaja Hira Singh had another child elder than Ripudaman Singh who was a daughter. She was also given the name Ripudaman Kaur and was married to the Maharaja of Dholpur.⁴ Born and bred as a prince Ripudaman Singh started his education in *Gurmukhi* under the charge of Bhai Kahan Singh, an extremely learned scholar of his days. He could very easily read the scriptures and often would take pleasure in recitation of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. For English education special tutor in the person of Lala Bishan Das who was then working as Headmaster of a High School in Dera Ismail Khan and who originally belonged to Nabha was recruited.⁵

The State of Nabha occupied second position among the princely states of Punjab. It comprised an area of 968 square miles. According to the Census

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1. Maharaja Ripudaman Singh adopted the title of 'Malvindra Bahadur' at the time of his succession and after that he was to be known as Maharaja Ripudaman Singh Malvindra Bahadur. *Truth About Nabha*, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar, 1924, p.39.
2. According to Gurmukh Singh Gurmukh, the editor of '*Fateh*', a newspaper of Lahore, Maharaja Ripudaman Singh changed his name after his abdication from the administration of Nabha State. Gurcharan was the new name of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha. Gurmukh Singh Gurmukh, *Jlavattan Maharaja*, Central Khalsa Young man's Union, Lahore, 1940, p.14.
3. *Ibid*; *Truth About Nabha*, op.cit.; Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *Gurshabadrattanakar Mahan Kosh*, Vol.3; Patiala State Government, Patiala, n.d., p.2083.
4. Sardar Munna Lal Syngal, *The Patriot Prince*, Doaba House, Ludhiana, 1961, p.9.
5. *Ibid.*, p.10.

of 1921, its population was 363,394 and its annual revenue was Rs. 240000.⁶ The portions of Nabha territory were interspersed like pieces in a jig-jaw puzzle between tracts of British India and the much larger Patiala State. As a discussion of all aspects of Nabha State, in their detail, is not possible in the present paper, I have decided to limit myself to only one important issue namely: The abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha was voluntarily or not.

The abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha was caused by a number of factors. A study of the early career and activities of the Maharaja reveals that he had come to acquire an independent and nationalistic outlook as a young prince. While still in his early twenties he gave an ample evidence of his feelings for the national aspirations. *Tikka* Ripudaman Singh was nominated as an additional member of the Governor-General's Imperial Legislative Council in 1907. He remained a member of that highest Legislative body in India, for two years.⁷ There is no denying the fact that the Maharaja had closer affiliations with the nationalists of his time, particularly Gopal Krishan Gokhale and Rash Behari Ghose, with whom he shared the membership of Viceroy's Council as a prince and supported the *Akali* struggle for *Gurdwara* reform; the popular belief that he was deprived of his throne mainly because of his having championed the *Akali* cause is only partially correct. This might have been due to his traditional upbringing in the country, the spirit of independence which he had seen while in England.

In February 1907 he quite boldly took up the cause of a Sikh *granthi* of the 14th Sikh Regiment who had been dismissed because he had not correctly *salaamed* an English Officer from his seat behind the *Guru Granth Sahib*.⁸ In spite of the efforts of too powerful secretaries of the Government in India, J.K. Dunlop Smith and J.M. Macpherson to discourage him, he stood his ground in this case. That the question raised by Ripudaman Singh was finally disallowed by the Viceroy indicates the extent of his boldness in raising what must have appeared was a dangerous issue.⁹ A few days after this he wanted to ask a question about the injury done to Sikh religious feelings by the distortions and vilifications of a German Missionary, Dr. Ernest Truemp,

6. *Census of India 1921, Punjab*, Parts 1 and 2.

7. Office of the Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja of Nabha, List No.15,1917; *Who is Who*, London, n. d., Punjab State Archives, Patiala.

8. Speech made on the 27th of March, 1907, in the Legislative Council, Vol. XLVI., *Truth About Nabha*, op.cit., pp. 42-43.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

employed by the Government to translate *Guru Granth Sahib*.¹⁰ According to M.A. Macauliffe, "His work was highly inaccurate and unidiomatic and further more gave mortal offence to the Sikhs by the odium theologicum introduced into it."¹¹ He further said that whenever Dr. Trump saw an opportunity of defaming the Gurus, the sacred book, and the religion of the Sikhs, he eagerly availed himself of it. For the Nabha prince, Trump had hurt the Sikh sentiments badly. These sentiments were put before the Government by Ripudaman Singh and an explanation sought. The Viceroy simply put his foot on it by disallowing the question on the usual plea that it would not be in public interest to reply this question. That proved no avail but to the Sikhs, Ripudaman Singh appeared both radical and true Sikh.

As a member of the Imperial Council, Ripudaman Singh also took enlightened interest in the issues which did not directly concern his community, but they were of concern to Indian nation as a whole. Dr. Ghose and Gokhale opposed the prevention of Seditious Meeting Bill when it was put before the Imperial Council in November 1907, Ripudaman Singh joined hands with the nationalists. He was equally penetrative and critical when called upon to speak on the Newspaper Act 1808 and Press Bill of 1910 moved by the Government for the consideration of the Imperial Council in 1908. He said, "That a person should be hauled up for merely an expression of opinion for simply speaking on behalf of freedom and against oppression was highly undesirable."¹² Prince Ripudaman Singh encouraged and assisted M.A. Macauliffe in the preparation of his monumental and world-famous work. In helping Mr. Macauliffe, His Highness helped the cause of Sikh history.

Being a Punjabi and a would be ruler of an important state in the Punjab, he was as much interested in the advancement and progress of Punjab as that of the country. While advocating Punjab's claim for equality in the matter of rights and privileges, the Prince of Nabha emphasized that the "Punjab cannot be considered in any way less advanced or less intelligent than its sister and neighbouring provinces."¹³ He introduced in the Imperial Council the Anand Marriage Bill to simplify the Sikh wedding ceremonial, then a matter of great importance for the reformist Sikhs. The following years Ripudaman Singh spoke with equal firmness on the question of relations between Indians and Europeans: "It has been said that this idea of equality of treatment is the fruit

10. *Ibid.*

11. M.A. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, Vol. 1, Oxford, London, 1909, p. vii.

12. Sardar Munnalal Syngal, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

13. Speech in the Legislative Council, dated 27th March, 1907.

of English education, but, if I may be permitted, I can safely say that to an Indian his *izzat* has been from time immemorial dearer than life itself."

The things, however, did not end here. After the expiry of his term as a member in the Council, he was sent to England by his father in the hope that he might learn the Western values and culture there. But there again he gave proof of his independent spirit. Instead of blindly following the Western culture, he learnt about the spirit of independence there. His succession to the throne of Nabha was marked by a serious conflict with the Government. Brought up in the modern democratic school and a man of stubborn and tenacious will, as he was, the Maharaja took special pleasure in challenging the authority of the British officers whenever he could.

It was not surprising to find the Prince of Nabha resisting the undue interference in his administration by the European officials when he took over the control of his State after the death of his father, Maharaja Hira Singh. His succession to the throne of Nabha was marked by serious conflict with the Government. The State at that time was under the control of Political Agent to Phulkian States, C.H. Atkins. Every succession to the throne of a Native State required the sanction of the paramount power. The young prince believed that his succession, flawless in law as well as usage, was a matter of right, and valid without any British sanction or ceremony.¹⁴ The Governor General in Council sanctioned his succession to the throne and the British representative had gone to the Maharaja's *Darbar* and formally recognized him as the Ruling Chief of Nabha. Now according to the programme drafted for investiture of the new Maharaja, Ripudaman Singh was to attend the Government *Darbar* and to be installed by the Government representative as the Chief of the State and be invested with ruling powers. Ripudaman Singh objected to this programme. He insisted that the *Darbar* should be held by the Maharaja himself as a matter of right and not by the Government of India or any of its representative.¹⁵

When C.H. Atkins, the Political Agent to the Phulkian States, wrote to the Maharaja Ripudaman Singh on March 2, 1912, "I am to place the necklace round Your Highness' neck, to fasten the *sarpech* on Your Highness' turban and to bind the sword on Your Highness' person,"¹⁶ the Maharaja wrote back

14. File No. 4/June 1917, Foreign Department, Political, Secret-I, NAI.

15. File No. 13/January 1914, Foreign Department, Political, Secret-I, NAI.

16. Letter dated 22nd March, 1912, from the Political Agent to the Phulkian States to the Maharaja of Nabha, File No. 18, Punjab State Archives, Patiala (Nabha Records).

that all that was unacceptable to him.¹⁷ He pleaded that at the preceding investiture ceremony in Nabha "only a necklace was put on my father, but no sword nor a *sarpech*, and I wish that the same procedure should be followed. Louise Dane, the Lt. Governor of Punjab, wrote to him that he wished to pay a visit to Nabha, the Maharaja, instead of feeling privileged and offering his warm welcome, replied that it was not possible for him to "receive a visit from His Honour."¹⁸ The visits by the Viceroy and his representatives were considered matters of high privilege and honour by the Princely rulers and their one ambition used to be to avail themselves of these for demonstrating their loyalty and lavishness of entertainment and hospitality. It was unheard of for a ruler to decline to receive such a visit like the Maharaja of Nabha had done soon after his succession.

Several other points of friction arose. The Maharaja reveled in challenging the British authority whenever he could. He combined with his deeply anti-British sentiments an acute sensitivity about his rights and position as a ruler. He carried on a long-drawn debate with the Political Department on the niceties of his prerogatives derived from his *sanads*. His correspondence with the representatives of the Crown is revelatory of his stubborn and tenacious will, and of his elegant, unyielding and abrasive style of expression. The Maharaja resented the practice of giving notice to the Government for visiting a place outside his state. Commenting on the shortness of notice given about his intended visit to Mussorie in 1914, the Lt. Governor inquired what the Maharaja would think and do if he (Lt. Governor) visited his state without notice. The declaration of war in 1914 brought him further troubles when instead of joining hands with the officials in the Punjab, he made a direct offer of help to the Viceroy.

All these factors combined together gradually produced a certain amount of ill-feeling against the Maharaja among the Punjab officials who wanted to utilize the 12 year old dispute between the rulers of the two sister states, the Nabha and Patiala. The relations between Nabha and Patiala States during Maharaja Hira Singh's reign were very friendly. Ripudaman Singh succeeded his father, Hira Singh, who died in December 1911. In 1900 Bhupinder Singh succeeded his father Rajinder Singh of Patiala. As Bhupinder Singh was only a minor at that time the administration was controlled by a Council of Regency. The full powers were conferred on Bhupinder Singh only on October 1, 1909

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Letter dated 11th January, 1913*, from Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha to Mr. C.H. Atkins, Political Agent, Phulkian States.

when he had come of age.¹⁹ The new ruler of Patiala, Bhupinder Singh had continued to maintain the same good relation with Hira Singh as his father had. The Maharaja of Patiala always saw in Hira Singh the most revered *Baba* and respected him.²⁰ With Ripudaman Singh's succession in 1911 the relations between the Nabha and the Patiala rulers continued to be fairly good for some months. But soon afterwards they fell out with each other and misunderstanding began to develop between these two cousins.

Possibly the reason of friction was that both of them were more or less of the same age and again both had succeeded to power at about the same time. They were as jealous of each other as sensitive about their status and prestige. The hypersensitivity about their status was by no means peculiar to them. Most Indian princes in those days had it.²¹ According to Barbara Ramusack, "Each prince was ambitious, arrogant, energetic and jealous." There were, of course, other reasons why they could not pull along well. The Nabha and Patiala territories were such that they intertwined at many places and, therefore, caused many border and jurisdictional disputes.²² In some cases one state got an island of territory surrounded on all sides by dominion of the other state.

While Maharaja Hira Singh had still two or three years of life, Bhupinder Singh came over to Nabha and asked for a loan of one Col. Bakhshish Singh's services who was then a Commandant of the Nabha State troops. The deputation was for a year. But this deputation meant much to cause a breach between the relations of the two rulers. A sort of big party was growing in Patiala and assuming power and the appointment of Bhai Kahan Singh was a link in the chain. Ripudaman Singh demanded the return of Bakhshish Singh which Patiala refused.²³ At one time when the offer of Nabha troops was refused as being unfit, the one grievance put forth by Ripudaman Singh was that his commandant was in Patiala and was not being returned. Apart from the deputation of Colonel Bakhshish Singh relations between the two rulers further got strained because of Bhai Kahan Singh of Nabha.

With the death of Maharaja Hira Singh, it was expected that Bhai Kahan Singh, a Sikh scholar would be supreme as he was so well connected

19. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *op.cit.*, pp. 2199-2206.

20. Sardar Munnalal Syngal, *op.cit.*, p.50.

21. Barbara N. Ramusack, 'Incident at Nabha', *The Panjab Past and Present : Essays in Honour of Dr. Ganda Singh*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1978, p.434.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Sardar Munnalal Syngal, *op.cit.*

with Ripudaman Singh as a prince. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha earned the title of Sardar Bahadur for his services to Nabha State.²⁴ Bhai Kahan Singh had then wielded a lot of influence on the prince as tutor. When appointed a judge of the newly established High Court in 1913 he, therefore, began wielding great powers in the state. However, difference arose between him and Maharaja Ripudaman Singh. Bhai Kahan Singh left the Nabha State and went to Patiala where after some time he was appointed *Vakil* to the Political Agent. This appointment was of a highly delicate nature but one which could help Kahan Singh to poison the mind of the Political Agent against the Maharaja.

Maharaja Ripudaman Singh resented this appointment and had tried to persuade the political department not to go in for his appointment but failed to carry conviction with the department. He failed dismally to get Bhai Kahan Singh removed from his appointment with the Political Agent but succeeded in spoiling his relations with the Maharaja of Patiala. Ripudaman Singh's attitude towards the Government was completely lacking in servility and was in sharp contrast to that of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala. Moreover, his attitude was attributed to his nationalist temper. The growing popularity of the Patiala ruler with the Government was of great un-ease to the Nabha ruler and it further unnerved him.²⁵

In the meantime a new dispute arose between Bhupinder Singh and Ripudaman Singh, related to a girl. Maharaja of Patiala leveled charges like internment of Patiala citizens, abduction of girls etc. against Ripudaman Singh. The Maharaja of Nabha sent a deputation to the Maharaja of Patiala asking for reconciliation. But in reply he said he was ready to resume his former friendship with Nabha only on four conditions.²⁶

(i) Nabha has taken an active interest in the *Swaraj* and non-cooperation movements of the British Indian Extremists and has actually helped people like Caveesher and maintained men like S. Charan Singh Sahid for propaganda work which is directly hostile to the British Government. There he should renounce in frank terms and give in writing an undertaking for the future of the effect that he will restrain from having any association with the political propaganda of British India.

24. *Ibid.*, p.49; Rachhpal Kaur (ed.), *Bhai Kahan Singh De Aparkashit Safarnama* (Punjabi), Brijesha Prakashan, Nabha, 1983, p.xvi.

25. Barbara N. Ramusack, *op.cit.*, p.437.

26. Fortnightly Report for the First half of January 1922, in *File No. 18/January 1922*, Home Political, NAI.

(ii) Abdul Aziz must be acquitted honourably forthwith, as also the other two men of the Patiala Police, and a letter of regret must be sent regarding the misconduct and behaviour of the Nabha Police and courts. Further the police officers of Nabha who worked this wicked act should be handed over to the Patiala authorities for suitable treatment. This should be done at once.

(iii) Let Nabha surrender our accused first, then we will reciprocate.

(iv) As regards the list of the girls, I do not consider it necessary to go into details. His Highness of Nabha knows them; but by way of example, I will mention the names of only two of them, viz., (i) Narijan Kaur of Karamgarh, sister of Captain Balwant Singh; (ii) Devinder Kaur, daughter of late *Sardar* Nanak Singh of Bhadaur, wife of Shivdev Singh, at present prisoner in Nabha jail.

There was no chance of Nabha accepting these conditions, and failing this Patiala broke off all direct communication with Nabha. The charges leveled against Nabha by Patiala State were baseless. The Maharaja of Patiala was very bitter because he said, he had lost so much prestige with his own subjects.²⁷ In Foreign and Political Department Resolution No. 2561-268 Intl., dated 19th of December 1922, the Governor-General in Council appointed Mr. Justice L. Stuart, C.I.E., I.C.S., Puisne Judge of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad to be a Commissioner to enquire into certain charges of violation of sovereignty and other unfriendly acts which had been brought by Maharaja of Patiala and Maharaja of Nabha against each other.²⁸ Mr. Stuart upheld many of the charges leveled against the Maharaja of Nabha. Lord Reading approved the verdict given by the Stuart Commission.²⁹

In his findings Mr. Stuart held both the Maharajas guilty of one offence or the other. It is strange that while the Maharaja of Patiala escaped from punishment, Ripudaman Singh was made to abdicate in favour of his minor son on the 9th of July, 1923, and was removed to Dehradun. According to the Government's statement, the Maharaja had voluntarily offered to sever his connections with Nabha State to avoid harsher treatment because he was

27. Fortnightly Report for the second half of the April 1922, in *File No. 18/April 1922*, Home Political, NAI.

28. *File No. 148/II/1923*, Home Political, NAI.

29. *File No. 401/1924*, Home Political, NAI.

found guilty in the report.³⁰ Ripudaman Singh did not agree with this statement when he said that "he was intimidated into seeking voluntary retirement by his self-seeking officials and the Political Agents."³¹ Infact the allegation of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh seems correct from the letter which Col. Minchin wrote to J.P.Thompson, Secretary in the Political Department of the Government of India on June 5,1923. Col. Minchin stated in this letter, to have enjoined the Maharaja "to voluntarily sever all his connections with the administration of his state."³²

The study of the factors discussed above shows that the ground for the Maharaja's removal had been prepared much earlier; infact right from the days when he occupied the throne. The abdication of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh was not voluntary. Infact he was forcefully removed from the administration of Nabha State. His independent nature and the hallow of personality that the Maharaja had come to acquire was an eye-sore to the British is evident from an important line in the report, "Ever since the Maharaja of Nabha succeeded his father, the Government of India have had abundant proof that the whole policy of the state has been dominated by his personality."³³

30. *File No. 298*, Nabha Records, PSA.

31. *File No. 18*, Nabha Records, PSA.

32. *File No. 628-3-P/1923*, Foreign Political, NAI.

33. *File No.298*, Nabha Records, PSA.

FOUNDATION OF THE NEW CITIES BY THE BRITISHERS IN THE PUNJAB

*Krishan Lal Sachdeva**

In this paper, I propose to briefly give an account of those cities of present Punjab, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh, which were established by the Britishers between 1803 till their departure in 1947. I wish to throw some light on Ambala Cantonment, Bhiwani, Bukloh, Dalhousie, Dharmsala, Dughshai, Ferozepur Cantonment, Gurgaon Cantonment, Hansi Cantonment, Hoshiarpur Cantonment, Jalandhar Cantonment, Kalka, Karnal Cantonment, Kartarpur Cantonment, Kasauli, Ludhiana Cantonment, Nakodar Cantonment, Phillour, Rewari Cantonment, Sanawar, Shimla, Sirsa, Solan and Subatho. Some future scholar may supplement this list by adding a few more names. It is true that some of the cantonments were abandoned owing to unhealthiness of the stations or the changes of political situation like advancement of the British frontiers after their foundation.

Motives of the Britishers

There were many motives behind the establishment of new cities, but three appeared to be the dominated one. Firstly it was defence, the second was the view point of health. As many British officers and soldiers fell ill and many times their illness proved fatal,¹ therefore an attempt was made to find out those hill stations, whose climate tallied with that of some cities of England. In the records of the Punjab Government, there is a lengthy correspondence which shows that the weather of Subatho near Shimla was found to be like London.² Therefore Shimla (near Subatho) became the summer capital of India. Similarly other hill stations like Dalhousie, Dharmsala, Solan, Subatho, Kasauli and Sanawar became new centres of stay during the summer months. Third motive was commercial. They wanted to establish or revive old centres for commerce. Cities like Bhiwani and Sirsa were established with this motive.

* Jalandhar.

1. Philip Davis, *Splendours of the Raj (British Architecture in India 1660-1947)*, Dass Media, New Delhi, 1985, p.122.
2. Punjab Government Records (Volume I), *Delhi Residency and Agency*, Lahore, 1911, p.143

Cantonments

The foundation of cantonments was directly linked with external and internal threats.

Threat of foreign invasions

1. French Danger : Relations of England with France had not been cordial during the eighteenth century. Three Carnatic wars were the outcome of strained relations between these two European powers. The French revolution and rise of Napoleon led to a number of wars between these two countries. During the period of Lord Wellesley (1799- 1804), French threat was considered to be a major problem before the British statesmen of this period. Battle of Nile, French invasion of Russia and battle of Waterloo had some impact on Indian history.³

2. Afghan Threat : Successors of Ahmad Shah Abdali remained another source of worry during the last decade of the eighteenth century.⁴

3. Russian Threat : Russian advancement in central Asia towards Afghanistan became the cause of first Anglo- Afghan war (1839-42)⁵ and second Afghan war (1876-78). The policy of masterly inactivity (instead of forward policy) also implied that defence must be strengthened in India itself.⁶

4. German Threat : Under Willam-II, German imperialism touched new heights. Strengthening of German navy and Berlin-Bagdad railway projects endangered British Empire. During First and Second world wars, England and Germany fought against one another. Thus, the German imperialism was a direct change to British imperialism.

5. Japanese Danger : From 1930, the power of Japan began to increase with a great speed. Japan became a part of axis power and succeeded in invading eastern parts of India. Thus, upto the end of the Second World War, Japan posed a serious threat to the British Indian Empire. Therefore various cantonments in whole of India had to be strengthened.

Internal Problems : Upto 1802, the British Empire in India was at some distance from the Punjab. But the British success in the Anglo- Maratha war (1803-04) led to the occupation of Delhi and some areas of modern Haryana.

(a) Problem of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors : The

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3. S.P.Sen, *The French in India 1763-1816*, Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, New Delhi, Second Edition, 1973, p. 541.
 4. Birendra Verma, *English East India Company and the Afghans, 1757-1800*, p.x.
 5. B.D. Basu, *India under the British Crown*, R.C. Chatterjee, Calcutta, 1933, p. 216.
 6. Dharam Pal Dr., *The Administration of Sir John Lawrence (1864-1869)*, Minerva Book Depot, Simla, 1952, p. 202.

Britishers then faced a challenge from the rising power of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This led to the establishment of a number of cantonments at Karnal, Ambala and Ludhiana. Then their success in first Anglo- Sikh war (1845-46) led to the annexation of Jalandhar Doab. Then cantonments were established in Jalandhar, Nakodar and Kartarpur. After the annexation of Punjab, Afghan problem and the Russian threat compelled them to maintain cantonment of Jalandhar. It was also necessary to give support of military to the newly established British rule in the Punjab.

(b) Problem of Rajput States : In 1803, the Rajput states had their separate entity. It was in the period of Lord Hasting(1813-23) that these came under British paramountcy.⁷ The British set backs in Bharatpur in 1804-05 also compelled them to establish and maintain cantonments in Rewari and Gurgaon.⁸ The establishment of their control over Ajmer gave them an opportunity to establish their military bases in Rajputana itself in addition to the Delhi territory.

Foundation of Cantonments in Present Haryana

A number of cantonments were established in this region. Some of these were:-

1. Gurgaon : This place was first occupied by some troops of cavalry, who were posted to watch the army of Begam Samru of Sardhana,⁹ whose principal cantonment was at the village of Jharsa, a mile to the south east.¹⁰

2. Rewari : Walter Hamilton wrote in 1818 "the military cantonments are three miles distant from the town and usually accompanied three Battalions of Infantry."¹¹ This cantonment was at Bharawas village and had been established in 1803,¹² after the treaty of Surge Anjengaum and formed a frontier post until 1816, when on the cession of Ajmer territory, it was moved to Nasirabad.¹³

7. K.K.Sehgal, *Rajasthan District Gazetteer, Bhartpur*, Government of Rajasthan, Jaipur, 1971, p. 70.

8. Maya Ram, *Rajasthan District Gazetteer, Alwar*, Jaipur, 1968, p.59.

9. Mahendra Narain Sharma Dr., *The Life and Times of Begam Samru of Sardhana(A.D. 1750-1836)*, Vibha Prakashan, Sahibabad, 1985, p. 19; *Gurgaon Gazetteer*, p.245.

10. *Gurgaon Gazetteer*.

11. Walter Hamilton, *Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of Hindostan and the Adjacent Countries*, 2nd Original Edition, 1820 (Reprint), Orient Publishers, Delhi, 1971, Vol. I, p.424.

12. Sidney G. Owen, *A Selection From The Dispatches Treaties and Other Papers to the Marquess of Wellesley*, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1877, pp. 417-423.

13. *Gurgaon Gazetteer*, p. 244.

3. Karnal : on the Grand Trunk Road between Delhi and Ambala, a cantonment was established. It was, for some time, the British Frontier station and a strong force of troops was kept here.¹⁴ Thornton wrote, "North of the town (Karnal) and adjoining it, is a cantonment of British troops. On February 16, 1837, the British Commander-in-Chief was met by General Duncan, Commanding Officer of Karnal Brigade and on the next day, there was a review of the troops."¹⁵ General Duncan was living in the house, which had been constructed for General Sir David Ochterlony. On the gradual extension of British power towards the Sutlej and the Punjab, it was abandoned in 1841.¹⁶

4. Ambala : Ambala cantonment is a big military cantonment. It was laid out in 1843 and covered 7,200 acres. David Ross wrote in 1883, "the shape is an oblong running from north-east to south-west. The garrison consists of three batteries of artillery, a regiment of European and the native infantry. The European lines and barracks are on the north-west and east, the native infantry on the south. In the centre is St. Paul's Church, a handsome semi-gothic structure capable of seating 1,000 persons. There are two others, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic. In the Sadar bazar is small Church for the accommodation of the Indian Christian population and a mission church and school in connection with the American Presbyterian Society. Each division of the garrison has its own bazaar and accommodation for Indian servants and camp-followers. The Sadar bazaar is large and well arranged and contains a population of nearly 40,700; close by are the race course and the cemetery. Near the Church and the Mall is a garden with a band stand, and between the race course and the native (Indian) cavalry lines the Pagey park, which is well laid out, and ornamented with five banyan trees."

The principal public buildings are the Masonic hall, the Sirhind club, situated on the mall; the public library, post office and the commissioner's kutcherry, near paget park. There are three good hotels and a dak bungalow.¹⁷

Protection from floods : The cantonment was formerly flooded periodically by the overflow of the Tangri Nadi River. To prevent this, a long bandh was constructed, but since its completion the wells have dried up and

14. Edward Thornton, *A Gazetteer of the Territories under The Government of the East India Company* (First published 1858), Reprint, Delhi, Low Price, 1993, p. 344.

15. Henry Edward Fane, *Five Years in India*, Vol. I (Reprint), Language Department, Patiala, 1970, pp. 57-58.

16. David Ross, *The Land of The Five Rivers and Sindh*, (Original edition 1883), Language Department, Patiala, Reprint, 1970, p.24.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 231.

the garrison for which Ambala was remarkable, have suffered considerably.¹⁸ New works are being constructed which, it is believed, will supply all the water required for this favourable station.”¹⁹

Hostile View : On the other hand T.D.L. who visited Ambala Cantonment on February 6, 1852 was not happy to see it. He wrote, “I was disappointed with Ambala cantonment, which is four miles from the city.”

5. Hansi : It was the capital of George Thomas for some time. After the Battle of Delhi on September 13, 1803, it was made a British cantonment for many years, A company of local levies was stationed there. In 1857, these levies took part in the revolt. They murdered some Europeans and joined hands with local Rajput tribes. Under these circumstances, the Britishers decided not to maintain this cantonment after the suppression of the revolt.²⁰

Cantonments in Modern Punjab

1. Ludhiana Cantonment : Sir David Ochterlony had occupied this place in 1809. By the treaty of 1809, Sutlej became the boundary line between the Britishers and the Sikhs. Thus, Ludhiana became the British Military outpost across Sutlej. Cantonment in this place was maintained up to 1854.²¹ A most severe hurricane visited Ludhiana on the 20th May, 1846, which caused great loss of life and the total destruction of the European barracks, which were badly built of unsound material. About 200 souls, principally women and children of the 50th regiment were killed. Most of the soldiers and husbands were in the field at the time of loss of life would have been much greater. The graves in the cemetery to the west of the cantonment. After the end of two Sikh wars and the annexation of whole of the Punjab and the establishment of cantonment in Jalandhar, it was decided to abandon cantonment of Ludhiana. T.D.L. had visited Ludhiana cantonment on 14th February 1852 and had observed, “on account of the unhealthy situation, the Honourable East Indian Company are gradually abandoning it as a situation; it struck me that if they do not soon quit it, it will quit the troops. For both Bungalows and walls are crumbling to decay.”²²

2. Phillour Cantonment : Maharaja Ranjit Singh had built a fort and cantonment at this place in 1807. After the annexation of the Jalandhar Doab, the Britishers decided to make use of this place as a cantonment. The fort,

18. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

19. T.D.L., *A Narrative of the Journey through India*, Westminster, 1837, p. 87.

20. David Ross, p. 298, *Hissar Gazetteer*, p. 244.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

22. T.D.L., p. 88.

which is conspicuous by its large barbican, was an important artillery arsenal and magazine.²³ The Indian soldiers of the place joined hands with the rebels in the revolt of 1857. Then the Britishers decided not to use it as a cantonment any longer.

3. Jalandhar Cantonment : There is a Jalandhar cantonment railway station, which is at a distance of three miles from railway station of Jalandhar city. The cantonment was built in 1846 on the annexation of the Jalandhar doab.²⁴ It covers an area of 7.5 square miles. It had a population of 9,500 in 1881. The cantonment usually contained one European regiment, one battery of artillery. One regiment of native infantry, and a small detachment of native cavalry from Ambala. It was the army sent from Jalandhar cantonment, which opened fire on the people in Jallianwala Bagh. This event has been given in great detail by various scholars, who have written on Jallianwala bagh massacre (like V.N.Datta and Dr. Raja Ram). A European scholar has brought a well documented work called '*Butcher of Amritsar*'.

4. Hoshiarpur Cantonment : The Sikhs maintained here a large cantonment, which was kept up by the British, for some time after the annexation of the Punjab.²⁵

5. Cantonment in Nakodar : A cantonment was built here in 1846, but it was abandoned in 1854 as whole of Punjab had been annexed.²⁶

6. Cantonment in Kartarpur : A cantonment was established here in 1846, but it was abandoned in 1854.²⁷

7. Ferozpur Cantonment : David Ross wrote in 1883, " Ferozpur cantonment has a population of 18,000. There are two regiments and two batteries of artillery stationed here. It was the chief arsenal for northern India, well stored with ammunition of war and therefore a place of considerable importance. The streets are wide and well paved.In 1857, two native regiments revolted. They plundered and destroyed some buildings of the cantonment. But the presence of the British regiment and some European artillerymen, the arsenal and magazine, however were saved."²⁸

Like Jalandhar cantonment, Ferozpur cantonment is at present, a very flourishing urban centre. Although its nearness to Pakistan, has retarded its

23. David Ross, p. 227.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

26. Baldev Raj Sharma, *Punjab Gazetteer, Jalandhar*, Revenue Department of Punjab Government, Chandigarh, 1980, p. 43.

27. *Ibid.*

28. David Ross, p. 116.

steady progress to some extent, yet the strategic importance of it as a military station has added to its usefulness.

Cantonments in Himachal Pradesh

Gurkhas of Nepal had created some problem for Maharaja Ranjit Singh, which led to his occupation of Kangra. The Britishers fought a war against them in 1814.²⁹ Therefore, some cantonments were established in this hilly region. Health consideration of British officers and soldiers also contributed to the establishment of some cantonments in the Simla Hill states. Some of these cantonments may be mentioned here :

1. Bukloh : It is a military station for Gurkhas.³⁰ It is on the route from Pathankot to Dalhousie.

2. Dughshai : It is at a distance of ten miles from Kalka. This military cantonment is at a height of 5,000 feet. It was established in 1842. It was generally occupied by one European battalion.³¹

3. Kasauli : Kasauli is at a height of 6,070 feet from the sea level.³² It is the first hill station, one sees when one approaches the Simla hills. It was developed as a cantonment over 20 years after the British established at Simla (1845 A.D.) It is at a distance of 35 kilometer from Kalka and 40 miles from Chandigarh. A Military Cantonment Board takes care of this hill station. Many civilians have also built their houses here. There are a number of hotels here also.³³

4. Solan : It was acquired in 1863 for a rifle range. It had a small cantonment. Usually three companies of troops occupied this place.³⁴

5. Subatho : It stands at the height of 4,500 feet above the sea level. It has been held as a military post since 1815-16, when it was ceded to the British on the close of the Gurkha War.³⁵ British commander-in-chief visited the place in 1838, who remarked, " There is a goorca(Gurkha) battalion..... The men of the corps are generally mountaineers from the Nepal (Nepal) hills."³⁶

29. James Mill and H.H. Wilson, *The History of British India*, Fifth Edition, London, James Madden, 1858, Vol. VIII, p. 59.

30. David Ross, p. 204.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 233.

32. Gillian Wright, *Hill Stations of India*, Twin Age Ltd., Hong Kong, 1991, p. 109.

33. *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, dated 10th August, 2008, A Spectrum, p. 10, Article by Major Himmat Singh, *Kasauli's Changing Ambience*.

34. David Ross, p. 236.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 235.

36. Fane, Vol. I, p. 102.

A number of above stated cantonments are in existence today and have developed as great urban centres, like Ambala, Jalandhar, Ferozpur, Kasauli, Solan etc. Of course, a few were abandoned as these were found to be very unhealthy for Europeans like Ludhiana. Others were abandoned as they lost their strategic importance owing to the submission of hostile powers like Gurgaon and Rewari. Some were abandoned as some of the soldiers located there had taken part in the revolt of 1857 and had killed their European officers like Hansi and Phillour.

Foundation or Revival of some Places owing to their commercial importance

1. Bhiwani : Although an ancient place, yet it was an insignificant at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It is claimed in an early edition of *Hisar Gazetteer*, "that the city is said to be a creation of the British at the beginning of the 19th century, when the Delhi territory came under British possession. At that time, Dadri (Charkhi) was a more important centre. In 1817, William Fraser, selected the site of the village for site of a *mandi* or the market.³⁷ As the Nawab had imposed many taxes on the traders, the traders welcomed the establishment of a market, where there were no taxes. Thus the popularity of Bhiwani as a trade centre attracted a large number of traders. In this manner, its growth and development took place.

2. Sirsa : Famine of San Chalisa (Samvat 1840 or A.D. 1783) had completely ruined this city. In 1837, the site of the town of Sirsa , once a populous and flourishing city was wholly deserted. There was no village, not even a single inhabited hut. Captain Throsby, who was appointed Superintendent of Bhutty Territories in 1837, called a meeting of the merchants in 1838 and promised to give them many facilities. The town was laid out.³⁸ A square crossed by Broad streets at right angles to each other was planned. After some years, it became a flourishing city.

Development of Hill Stations

Ill health led to the death of a large number of officers and soldiers. Therefore, the British authorities seriously thought to establish a large number of hill stations. Between 1815 and 1947, The British created over eighty hill stations on the lower mountain ranges of India at levels varying between 4,000 and 8,000 feet above sea level.³⁹ They provided rest and recreation for great urban centres of European population. The foot hills of the Himalayas contain

37. *Hissar Gazetteer*, p. 250.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 233.

39. Philip Davis, *Splendours of the Raj*, p. 111.

the largest number. Simla, Mussoorie, Nainital, Murree and Dalhousie were among the most favourites. A reference is being given to some of them.

1. Dharmsala : It is about 6,500 feet above sea level and an old Hindu temple is there. There is a small cantonment for troops. Lord Elgin, Viceroy of India, who died in 1867, is buried in the Church Yard. This place is very near to Kangra.⁴⁰

2. Kalka : The height of this place is only 2,270 feet above sea level. Its population in 1911 was 5,938. The area was acquired in 1846 by the British. The town of Kalka as it now stands did not exist then (1846). Its importance increased when Simla became a popular hill station.⁴¹ With the opening of Kalka Simla railway in 1903, its importance was greatly enhanced. It became a great trade centre.

3. Sanawar : The Lawrence Royal Military School (Popularly called Sanawar Public School) is located near Kasauli. It was founded by Sir Henry Lawrence in 1847.⁴² There was a separate girls' school and also a training college for European school masters. Thus, it has a big campus. In the beginning, it was meant for European boys, but now many Indian students receive education of high quality here.

4. Dalhousie : Dalhousie was named after the name of Lord Dalhousie (Governor-General of India in 1849-56) in 1851. The ruler of Chamba was asked for land to build a sanatorium. In 1853, four hills were transferred to the Government of India. In 1866, a fifth hill was acquired for a cantonment.

This site had originally been selected by Lord Napier in 1851. By 1860's it was a flourishing hill station. Non-official elite of Punjab especially from Lahore came in large numbers. Many buildings were constructed in this hill station. David Ross thought that Dalhousie was better than Murree and Simla. He wrote, "A comparison is commonly drawn between Dalhousie, Murree and Simla; but Dalhousie is in many respects more charming than either of those more fashionable place. Here the snow clad mountains approach a spur on which Dalhousie itself stands, while at Murree and Simla, they are at a great distance, and from only the background of the panorama. Immediately above Dalhousie to the east stands the granite peak of Dainkund, more than 9,000 feet high, which is covered with pink forests and capped with snow far into the summer months. Beyond this again are the peaks of the Dhola-dhar, covered with perpetual snow, shutting in the Kangra valley on the north and

40. David Ross, p. 219.

41. *Ambala Gazetteer*, pp. 139-140.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.

stretching into Kullu. Murree is a very pretty station, but does not possess the beautiful scenery which is characteristic of Dalhousie."⁴³

In 1853, four hills, Kathlog, Portrey, Dehra and Bakrota were transferred to the Government of India against the annual payment of Rs. 2,000 to Chamba state.⁴⁴

Now it is a very flourishing hill station. Many freedom fighters had visited this station. Sardar Ajit Singh (Uncle of Sardar Bhagat Singh) and Neta Ji Subhash Chander Bose visited it. There is a memorial to Sardar Ajit Singh.

5. Simla : Simla was the summer capital of British Government of India until the end of their rule in 1947.

History of its foundation and expansion

The hill principally occupied by Simla was ceded to the British in 1815-16, at the termination of the Gurkha war. It is situated at a height of 7,000 feet above sea level.

Two of the three temporary cottages were erected in 1819-21, but not until 1822 was a permanent house built. Officers from Ambala and neighbouring cantonments quickly followed this example. By 1826, the new settlement had acquired a reputation for salubrity and a cool and temperate climate.

The first Governor-General to visit Simla was Lord Amherst in the hot season of 1827..... Soon Viceroys with their staff began to come from Calcutta every year. The growth of Simla was consequently very rapid. It had increased from 30 houses in 1830 to 200 in 1866. John Lawrence officially made Simla as a summer capital. In 1881, its population in summer was 16,000 of whom 1,600 were Europeans.⁴⁵

Some of its major Buildings : A large number of buildings were constructed during the British or colonial period and most of them are being used as Government offices and some are housing offices of the Indian army. Some of them may be enumerated here.

1. Annandale. 2. Auckland House. 3. Barnes Court. 4. Bishop Cotton School. 5. Bollfagugnt. 6. Christ Church. 7. Cricket Ground. 8. Gaity Theatre. 9. Gordon Castle. 10. Hotel(old) Cecil. 11. Hotel Clarke. 12. Kennedy House. 13. The Mall Road. 14. The Municipal Library. 15. Observatory House. 16. Post Office. 17. Ripon Hospital. 18. Roman Cathedac Church. 19. Scandal Point. 20. Secretariat. 21. Snow Down (The residence of the Commander-in-Chief). 22. Stirling Castle. 23. Summer Hill Buildings. 24. Telegraph Office.

43. David Ross, p. 202.

44. Gillain Wright, *Hills*, pp. 58-59.

45. David Ross, p. 236.

25. Viceregal Lodge (Now it is being used as Institute of Advanced Studies and 26. Some Villas. Photographs of these buildings have been given in the book '*Splendours of the Raj*' by Philip Davis and '*Hill Stations of India*', by Gillian Wright.

Praise of Simla by contemporary Visitors

Emily Eden, sister of Lord Auckland wrote, "Well, it is really worth all trouble (of coming over to trouble). Such a beautiful place..... Views only too lovely, deep valleys on the drawing room side of (Governor- General's house) to the west.... You (her sister) may be quite comfortable about our health as far as climate goes; it is quite perfection, and altogether the Himalayas are sweet pretty hills."⁴⁶

Sir Fane also expressed similar views. He wrote, "This mountain station has now been for many years established and every year proves its advantages add to its popularity. It is something more than 7,000 feet above the level of the sea, and with the exception of the rainy season, which begins about the middle of June and ends in early September, a more delicious climate can not be."⁴⁷

Praise of some places and buildings

The travellers have paid glowing tribute to some of the places.

Anand Dale : "It is beautiful valley, about two miles off, full of large pine trees..... Annandale is a thick grove of fir trees, which no sun can efface." Many big functions like fancy fairs and horse races were held here. Emily Eden gives an account of such fairs and functions.⁴⁸

Jaiko Hill : Emily Eden wrote, "Governor- general Lord Auckland and I (Emily Eden) took such a nice ride yesterday, around the highest mountain to which is given the sublime name of Jacko."⁴⁹

Commander-in-Chief's House : Fane spoke very highly about the house of the commander-in-chief's house. He wrote, "My chief's house is perhaps the best in Simla."⁵⁰

Viceregal Lodge : (Now the Centre for Advanced Studies) - This building was constructed during the period of Lord Dufferin, though some additions and improvements also took place in latter years. Lord Lady Dufferin

46. Emily Eden, *Up The Country—Letters written to her Sister from the Upper Provinces of India*, edited by Edward Thomson, Oxford, 1937, p.125.

47. Fane, p. 100.

48. Emily Eden, pp. 167, 170.

49. *Ibid.*, p. 125.

50. Fane, Vol. I, p. 104.

wrote about it in the following manner. She wrote (Simla, July 15, 1888), "the house, too, now that it approaches completion, looks so well and perhaps this is a good opportunity to give you some idea of it. The entrance hall is a great feature of it. The stair case goes up from it, and there are some pillars dividing it from a wide corridor leading to the top of the house, three storeys. This gives an appearance of space and height, which is very grand. The corridor opens into the Ball room with a large arc; and a similar arc at one end of the ball room opens into the drawing room, which is a lovely room, furnished with gold and brown silks and with large bow windows, and a small round tower recess off it." ⁵¹

British Social Life : They held functions like horse races, fancy bazaars, ball room dances and dinner parties. Emily Eden gives an account of a fancy fair. Savings of this fair were given for opening a hospital. ⁵² Lady Dufferin gives an account of dinner parties, which were arranged in the house of the Viceroy. She wrote, "During our season in the country, we had twelve big dinners, guests, irrespective of our household, being from 25-50 in number; twenty nine small dinners with from 6-15 guests; one state ball, one fancy ball, one children's fancy ball six dances of about 250 people each, two garden parties and two evening parties. The total number of entertainments was 54 and the number of invited guests who actually did dine was 644. Horse races were also held. The Simla race began on 5th June, 1888." ⁵³

Female Society : Dancing and singing was quite common. ⁵⁴ Emily Eden mentions one Mrs. R., Who could sing equally well in five languages, French, English, German, Italian and Hindustani. She refers to three beautiful women. ⁵⁵ She wrote, three of the ladies were really pretty, but the odd thing is that Mrs. R., the plain one looked the best of all, and sat like a statue. It was a pretty sight. ⁵⁶ She also praises the beauty of a seventeen year old lady (Lola Montez), who latter on became a courtesan of King Ludwing of Bavaria. ⁵⁷ Modern European scholars have given her biographical sketch.

51. Marchioness Of Dufferin and Ava, *Our Viceregal life in India (Selections from Journals 1884-88)* in two volumes, London, John Murrey, Vol. II, p. 294.

52. Emily Eden, p. 161.

53. Dufferin, Vol. II, p. 171.

54. Emily Eden, p. 303.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 316.

57. Gillian Wright, *Hill Stations in India*, p. 115.

Kalka-Simla Railway : A mountain railway was an outstanding feat of engineering. Its cost was more than one million pounds. There are 102 tunnels and 869 bridges. The line passes through twenty railway stations.⁵⁸ The largest tunnel is of 3,753 feet long. It was designed by H.S. Harington. It was opened in 1903. The train carries more than 3, 50,000 passengers every year. The opening of the railway made the journey to Simla quite comfortable and the popularity of Simla as hill station increased immensely.

Conclusion : Although the motive of the Britishers for establishing cantonments, commercial towns and hill stations were their own defence needs, commercial interests and preventing of deaths of their officers and soldiers owing to the climate of India, yet many of the places built by them like Simla, Dalhousie, Solan, Sirsa, Bhiwani, Ambala cantonment, Jalandhar cantonment and Ferozpur cantonment are flourishing urban centres in the present Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 104-05.

SIKH NARRATIVES ON BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS INDIANS IN THE ARMY

*Amrit Varsha Gandhi**

Participation of Indians in the British army has adequately drawn interest of historians as the subject provides a true insight to the policies of colonizing India. The unfolding of the British attitude has raised more suspicions against the British and reflected mutual anguish and hatred between Indians and the British. If Indian recruitment was a fulfillment of the British need to pursue their imperialist designs of extending their empire it fulfilled Indians' need to acquaint with the aliens as well. However the dichotomy is that the mutual fulfillment created a void in their relationship in context of the military administration and foiled British attempt to build a military-politico combo.

This paper is based on the narrative of Sikhs¹ in the British army during the 20th century. The inference drawn from these narratives will substantiate for the purpose of understanding the fuzziness that existed in their relationship. The British recruited Indians into their army and categorized them into martial and non-martial races thus initiating a concept to colonize Indians with their help and support. The British focused to serve their imperialist interests but not without facing the opposition and discontentment of Indians. To adhere to the theme of the present conference this paper is an attempt to examine how the Indians especially the Sikhs responded at different phases to the concept of martial races perpetuated by the British.

The source material for this paper is primarily the oral narratives of the Sikhs in the army. The intention is to study Indian reaction on the basis of what they experienced themselves contrary to benevolent role that the writings of British scholars and administrative reports convey. The British portray dismal picture of the lives of Indians whose condition they claim to have improved. However oral reminiscences of native elements who responded in retrospect to the British policies reveal facts differently. The British game of playing

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1. Naranjan Singh Gill and General Mohan Singh recorded their reminiscences in 1973, at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Teen Murti House, New Delhi.

Hindus and Muslims against each other was to keep them divided. This created a rift in the minds and psyche of the communities who had shared a common history over a period of time. But even before that could shape into rigorously the British, for their petty interests, infiltrated into the Indian society by identifying Indians who were recruited into their army as martial and non-martial races. This was done to impinge any possibility of Indians uniting in opposition to imperial power at microscopic level. This paper is an attempt to focus on the Sikh narratives reacting on British acumen to turn Indians to their favour. This is also for the reason that "of the martial races the favourites of the English officials were the Sikhs and Gurkhas² and the British depended on them heavily.

Imperialist strategy to extend the empire and then to consolidate it to rule it with the support of Indian resources and manpower was ensured by thus keeping them divided. This was the beginning of the policy of Divide and Rule that became explicit when in context of the Indians' recruitment in the army the British made distinction of races into martial and non-martial. Its reference in context of India after 1857 is to be viewed more a part of their imperialist strategy to serve their colonial interests and to keep Indians divided.

British maneuvered to draw advantages out of political chaos and internal weaknesses of the Indian political set up during the phase of the decline of the Mughal power. When this was translated in relation to Punjab specially during Sikh wars that culminated in the annexation of the Punjab in 1849, the British concentrated on the warrior like qualities of the Sikh forces. In an endeavour to establish their control from Punjab the British followed to build another bond between themselves and the Punjab—that of "comradeship in arms."³

Opportunity for recruitment in British army to the Sikhs was profound after 1857 but partial attempts can not be ruled out immediately after the second Anglo-Sikh war and then the annexation of the Punjab in 1849 e.g. Punjab Irregular Force and then Punjab Frontier Force respectively. Lord Dalhousie faced the wrath of his critics when he selected more Sikh youth after 1849. Sir John Lawrence had even incorporated Sikh peasants into the forces of the East India Company once he was convinced of the lack of their interest to restore the Sikh state.⁴ The loyalty of the Sikhs in the Anglo-Burmese war, 1852 encouraged the British to enlist their support. This however

2. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol.II, OUP, 1966, p.115.

3. The British armed officials used this term in the handbooks for the Indian army. A.E. Barstow, *Sikhs: Handbooks For the Indian Army*, Revised, 1928. p.5

4. Khushwant Singh, *op.cit.*, p. 115.

was not done without causing much harm to the Sikhs within their community. British tried to divide them from within by an upward mobility of the Jats.

British policy of recruitment exhibited their sense of bias at the outset that intensified more so later on. Before creating a wedge by identification of races into martial and non-martial races the British by showing their preferences created a gulf between the Sikh community also. Jat Sikhs to the exclusion of Ramdasias and Mazhabis was preferred more. In fact Brigadier Hodgson who had commanded Sikh corps had laid down regulations for recruitment that continued as the *magna carta* except for modifications in minor details.⁵ These regulations were assented to by Lord Dalhousie in 1851 who further suggested them to settle all future disputes with care, keeping in view traditions of Khalsa and not to interfere with their religious sentiments. The spirit of these regulations was adhered to by General Peel in 1858-59 who headed the commission set up to reorganize the army after 1857. Re-organization strictly meant:

i) to increase European element at the cost of Indians ;⁶ ii) to remove Indian sepoys in artillery as far as possible, iii) general mix up of all classes and castes in the native regiments to destroy the unity and therewith the predominance of any particular element. These formulations intended strict British monopoly of artillery and sought to discourage the element of Indian unity against the British. Through such distinctions British set on the road to pursue the policy of Divide and Rule. Concept of being martial and non-martial lost any meaning being related even remotely to valour, bravery and physical attributes and war like qualities of the soldiers, it rather meant to dissuade them from building national front. It also meant to promote regional unity and divert their energy to promote their narrow interests. Under the pretension of granting them concessions, the British were more keen to tighten their imperialist hold.

Principle of Divide and Rule was explicit when Sir Charles Wood maintained in 1862, "I wish to have a different and rival spirit in different regiments so that Sikh might fire into Hindoo, Gurkhas into either, without any scruple in case of need."⁷ He told Canning, "I never wish to see again a great army, very much the same in its feelings and prejudices and connections

5. Secret Consultations, Foreign Department, National Archives of India.

6. Commissions of 1859 & 1879 insisted on 1/3 white army against 14% before 1857.

7. Quoted in Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India, 1885-1947*, Macmillan, Madras, Reprint 1992 (first published, 1983), p. 16; Kuldip Nayar and Khushwant Singh, *Tragedy of Punjab*, Vision Books, New Delhi, 1984, p. 27.

confident in its strengths, and so disposed to unite in rebellion together. If one regiment mutinies I should like to have the next regiment so alien that it would be ready to fire into it." These recommendations were perpetuated in 1869 and Lord Roberts, Commander-in chief followed more stringent ways to permanently engrain them in 1892. Sir John Strachey once described this policy of water tight compartments... to prevent the growth of any dangerous identity of feeling from community of race, religion, caste or local sympathies.⁸

It was only to gain time to see how far these intentions got fulfilled with the rising tide of nationalism and political awakening of the Indians. However by the turn of the century it became more clear that a bond of 'comrade-ship-in arms' was turning to be a mutual gain. Indian soldiers understood the British strategies and despite being a part to follow up their strategy they took favourable advantage of their inclusion into British system and structures, turned these contracts to understand them, and responded when discrimination seemed explicit. Being a favoured race the Sikhs took advantage of their hold and wanted to preserve their numerical strength in the armed services and did not loose their ground. This response many a times turned to a mutinous situation against the British. It was made clear to the British that Indians could not be taken for granted always. British tactics to repose false pride by identifying them as martial community against the other did not deter sikhs in the army to fall under the influence of the nationalist movement and carry their upsurge whenever needed.⁹

Punjab as the land of peasant proprietors served as the background to determine recruitment of the Sikhs in the British army. British intentions to turn agricultural land into smaller holdings turned traditional families out of agriculture and dislocated their family units inculcating in them more discontent and distrust. Preference for Sikh youth to be recruited in the army provided lucrative incentive for the youth to grab alternatives for employment. Lesser dependence on agriculture and meager industrial centres enhanced pace of the recruitment of the Sikhs in the army as it became imperative for their livelihood. British regarded Sikhs as one of the best of all the martial races and depended on them. This however was not taken up by the Sikhs always and they expressed their grievances as well as feeling of discrimination many a times.

8. John Strachey, *India*, London, 1888, p. 63.

9. Arun Shourie, "Lessons from the Punjab", in *The Punjab Story*, edited by Amarjit Kaur et al., Roli Books International, 1984, pp. 178-179. Shourie refers to the Sikhs as, "having retained a false pride in martial temperament and abilities".

False pride was not sufficient to keep them on the British side. Better alternative provided confidence to get out of the game of the British. Moreover the discontentment and disregard of civilian population for their religious and political sentiments had seeped in their youth who worked in British army in a very subtle way.

It is important to note here that recruitment of Sikhs in the army was the direct result of agrarian policies launched by the British as it had directly influenced the families from which the soldiers belonged.

During this entire period British laid emphasis on the need to preserve liaison between the civil and the military departments. It was incumbent on the British military officers to have working knowledge of civil administration and build relations with the villagers in the interest of recruitments and services generally.¹⁰ But ironically they devised policies that were contrary to build the liaison they so desired.

Twentieth century reflected impact of the Indian environment more effectively even though composition of the British army included more British commissioned officers and less Indian officers. The imbalance in such positions was not novel and had become the permanent feature since the British resolved to reorganize the army of which all were aware of. Isolation in terms of order of ranks and communities was a precaution against Indians uniting together. Owing to hierarchical position Indian soldiers had very less contact with the British and they remained at the lowest ebb of the army. This isolation of the Indians was true even at the rank of the soldiers also. British and Indian soldiers worked in tight compartments. Disparity in terms of pay, ration and other amenities was commonly not known. However many officers felt such disparity did not bother soldiers very seriously so long the British treated them reasonably good.. Indian soldiers were dedicated and loyal and so long the life in the army gave them a better life they remained satisfied. British were shrewd enough not to pass on the disparity so commonly. Moreover Indian soldiers were kept so separated in their regiments that they were not able to assess their status in comparison to the British soldiers, hence resentment due to comparative treatment within forces was lesser. But the general discontent against the British disseminated through the civilian families from which the soldiers came and spread the virus against them within the army.

10. A.E. Barstow, *op.cit.*

The argument is supported by the narrative of Mohan Singh¹¹ and it is of special interest to note what he felt on the situation in the Indian Army in 1920s and 1930s. He did not recollect any influence of the first world war on the Indians in general and on him. He however found impact of Gurdwara movement launched by Sikhs more effective. In this context he specifically referred to the take over of Ber Saheb Gurdwara at Sialkot from Mahants. This he felt was more instrumental to change his mind politically. He observed the undercurrent of the Sikh resentment and their inclination to acquire control of their religious shrine from Mahants. In this resentment was the resentment of the Sikhs to the British rule as the Mahants were supported by the British. Sikhs under the guidance of Jathedar Kesar Singh liberated Gurdwaras without any bloodshed. The General found this movement as much political and anti-British as was the Congress.¹²

Gurdwara Liberation movement had effectively drawn the attention of the rural population and it not only strengthened the base of the movement launched to redress their religious sentiments but it had a long term influence on the British. Rural areas happened to be the recruiting base for the British. This effected British policy of recruitment as religious discontentment had further penetrated the Sikhs in the army. Religious hurt of the Sikhs was the last straw to suspect British intentions and the British also pursued stringent measures against the Sikhs at any small pretext of misconduct of the Sikhs. Mutual suspicion and mistrust permeated the relationship of the Sikhs with the British. Extreme backlash in the form of a court martial for a slight pretext offended the Sikhs and those who had earlier served the British with loyal spirit left them.¹³ Jathedar Udham Singh, Jalal Usman Singh were all in the army who had later joined the Akali movement. To a larger extent they drew upon their experience within British army and organized their movement in a better way. Military training penetrated into these organizations and influenced those who spearheaded the movement.

Change in the perception of the Sikhs in the army in the wake of the Indian movements launched in 1920s can be gauged from reminiscences of

11. General Mohan Singh (b.1909-1989), village Ugoke, district Sialkot (now in Pakistan); joined army, 1927 as soldier and later became officer, surrendered to British, 1945, was detained at Red Fort, released in 1946; Founder, Desh Sewak Sena, 1947; Chairman All India Forward Bloc, 1950-55; member, Rajya Sabha, 1960-66, 1972-78, Punjab Legislative Assembly, 1967; wrote *Soldier's Contribution to Indian Independence*: d. 27 Dec. 1989.

12. Oral History Transcript, NMML, p. 18.

13. *Ibid.*, p.19.

Sardar Naranjan Singh Gill¹⁴ who spent many years in the army. He belonged to the "martial"¹⁵ family of his ancestor, General Mehtab Singh. He stayed in Chief's College at Lahore, 1918-22 and was first Cadet in Royal Indian Military College. From there he went to Royal Military College, Sandhurst, UK and was commissioned into the King's Commission in 1925. In his oral interview he had taken cognizance of the imperialist interests that worked out a policy to divide and rule India. His opinion cannot be ruled out because of his position within the army as well as his family antecedents.

He became well acquainted with the inside environment generated by the relations of Indian and British officers and could intensely feel the influence of his initial impressions during his association with the Indian National Army in 1940s. His reaction on recruitment in Chief's College evidence the British interests and bias in the selection of the Indian youth. Admissions were not open and British selected students from families whom they considered loyal and friendly towards the British. If Indian loyalty towards the British was the basic criteria they also ensured not to select Indians within political influence. The British discouraged candidates with political leanings and kept a serious vigil not to fall under such influences once they were in. The British focused on the privileged families of the Chiefs, the princes and the royals who had already rendered military services in favour of the British. Special care was taken to recommend syllabus that would turn Indians to admire them though visibly the content of the syllabus did not appear to be so. British took no endeavours to put Indians to higher positions as they did not trust them and thus ensured the army to be their faithful. British cadets in India were granted commissions in British units so as to acquaint British cadets with Indian ways and learn ways to act superior before coming into contact with Indian army. It needs to be pointed that Indians too were keen to learn British ways, to understand their strategies and to learn to deal with them. Indians later utilized these positions from British oriented platforms to explain Indian point of view and also to serve the cause of Indian nationalist interests. It needs to

14. Naranjan Singh Gill, (b.1906); educated at Lahore, Dehradun, and Sandhurst; commissioned into Indian Army, 1925; chief adviser to first Indian National Army; President, Pratinidhi Panthic Board, 1946; participated in cooperative farmers movements in post independent Punjab; accompanied Mahatma Gandhi in riot effected areas of Bengal and Bihar, 1947; Ambassador to Ethiopia, 1955, Thailand, 1960-64, Mexico, Cuba and Panama. Oral History Transcript, 10 May 1973. NMM&L.
15. He himself defined his family background essentially martial as his father too, after his education at Atchison Chief College, Lahore had joined Army. He died in the first world war. His own son was also in the Army.

be borne in mind that none of these Indian cadets came from deprived strata of society. They belonged to privileged classes hence stood by their own opinion when they felt strongly for the cause of Indians. Their military training was no barrier to imbibe influences of Indian events and the mass movements of prominent Indian leaders. Aspiration of many Sikhs to leave army and join Gandhi's ashram at various stages is a pointer.¹⁶

As a precaution against any mutinous situation only eight units of the army were opened to Indian cadets. They were mainly confined to Infantry and Cavalry so that they could command themselves only and not the British as the British had started moving from these units and Indians had started coming in. No Indian could get into technical arms like Signals, Artillery, Engineering. Gill himself had moved from his first year at Quetta in the British unit to the 7th Cavalry at Secunderabad to the 4th 19 Hyderabad regiment that later turned to be Hyderabad Kumaon Regiment. This inclusion was an opportunity to meet three other Indians namely—Harbans Singh Brar, M.I. Majid; K.S. Thimayya.

What concerned Indians more during this phase was a strict vigil on their trend towards Indian National movement. Being commissioned into army was no criteria to escape British check. Even casual remarks and a slightest inkling towards Indian prominent nationalist leaders was sufficient to raise suspicion in the minds of the British officials. They immediately conveyed to the political and administrative circles. The British identified these Indians and treated them with extra guard. Gill's impressions on Gandhi's Dandi March support the argument and explains how his casual remarks irked the British and how it created an unnecessary stir among the British officials.

Army was so structured that both British and Indians despite being in the same unit were aware of each other's intention to serve their own interests. Both were internally aware of the mutual mistrust. British attitude and resistance to the Indian cause of independence was explicit in isolating Indians from British soldiers of which Indians took notice of. British implied strict discipline to command Indian loyalty at all costs because of their training and upbringing to meet their imperialistic designs and prove faithful to the Raj. In fact Indians understood it so well that they even did not expect any favourable response from them and were learning ways rather to deal with them in an appropriate manner.

16. Gill confessed how Mahatma Gandhi's mass movements were influencing them and how he had even made up his mind to quit army and join his Ashram at Sabarmati.

The unenthusiastic support of the Sikhs during the second world war was reflected in their reluctance to enlist their support and disaffection in some regiments. A Sikh squadron of the Central India Horse refused to go overseas, many were court martialled, and a few executed. Some Sikhs of the 31st Punjabi regiment had deserted. Sikhs of the Royal Indian Army Supply Corps refused to load stores on the plea that they were not coolies. Sikhs were irked at the administration over matters of little import—non-availability of *jhatka* meat at railway stations, refusal of jail authorities to allow Sikh convicts to wear *kirpans*. British reacted against the news of resentment amongst the Sikhs and temporarily banned Sikh recruitment.

British reacted immediately and appointed a committee to look into causes of discontentment among the Sikhs and to answer their suspicion on account of reports of indiscipline. It constituted of Brigadier General AE Barstow, as its chairman, Major AJM Kilroy (36th Sikhs), Major AE Farewell (Ludhiana Sikhs), Major Billy (47th sikhs) and captain Naranjan Singh Gill. A Sikh was included to seek better and more inner information about their grievances. Gill sought views of the political leaders like Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Jathedar Udham Singh to examine whether neglect of Sikhs in the political arena under Sikander Hyat ministry was influencing the Sikhs in the army. A pervading sense of uneasiness among the Sikhs concerning Hyat ministry's alignment with Muslim League was noticed. What he found looked very trivial in retrospect but was effecting and adding to the sentiments of the Sikhs and raised sense of discrimination in them. Ban on *jhatka* meat and not on *halal* meat; to ask Sikhs to wear helmets (though soon got over) considerably disturbed Sikhs. He also gauged that discrimination at political level was manifested in the army and the Sikhs refused to go overseas. The British did not accept refusal to British command. It was treated as a case of indiscipline and a jolt to the British confidence and dependence.

Gill was one of the members of the committee constituted during the second world war in 1939 to look into the grievances of the Sikhs especially with regard to the British policy of recruitment in the army in the second world war.¹⁷ It is learnt that not till late 1939 any Indian officer was regularly posted in army headquarters. Paranjpye prior to Gill was posted purely on a temporary basis for a very short time. None of them despite being there was able to know anything about British moves or strategies as they were isolated to an extent of causing frustration in the army. Certain incidents of indiscipline among Sikhs were reported by British officials and caused them intense worry

17. A.E. Barstow, *op.cit.*

as they heavily depended on Sikh soldiers in the army. Since entire army contingent was divided into martial and non-martial races they thrived to keep martial races faithful and loyal and could not afford to let Sikhs live with frustration.

Members of the committee had individually toured Sikh districts to personally meet retired Sikhs and soldiers. By nature and their own sense of duty British were so sensitive to the suspicions raised that they did not spare Gill who had so truly given them the report. In fact reference to all such grievances of the Sikhs in the report cost Gill his position. He accepted that there was "dissatisfaction in the army and the obvious need was to meet these people, discuss matters with them and remedy it."¹⁸ Outwardly he was commended for giving such a true picture but in reality he was sent to Defence Department and was posted to Malaya to get rid of him from that circle of the army. Sir Charles O'Gilvy who was then the Defence Secretary who had served in Punjab and had suggested this enquiry told Gill, "Look, I like this report, I realize everything. Would you like to join the Defence Department? I would like you to be transferred to the Defence Department".¹⁹ His views had unexpected consequences for Gill and this explicates British sense and way to deal with anyone who opposed or informed them anything that did not favour them. Assurances were however given to political leaders that Sikh interests would be protected and would not be sacrificed to appease the Muslims. A Defence of India League under the chairmanship of Maharaja Patiala was formed to step up recruitment and ban on enlistment of Sikhs was lifted. But the die had been cast.

British were shrewd and diplomatic to scatter soldiers in such a way that little was it possible to convey the impact of one regiment on the other. The case of mutinous situation in the Garhwal regiment under Chander Singh is the pointer. The British ensured strict army discipline and maintained secrecy. It was only through the relationship of the soldiers with the civilians that the grudges and resentment was passed on or leaked. British soldiers did not let Indian soldiers get the news from direct sources. They preferred to explain to them the revolts in term of petty stories and brushed them aside in no time so that it did not carry lingering influences. Every effort was made not to transmit political atmosphere to them. It was only through occasional letters or meetings of the soldiers with their relatives that events of political situation got conveyed.

18. Oral History Transcript, Gill, *op.cit.*, p. 20

19. *Ibid.*

To retain the mind of the soldiers within the battalions the British exploited them through their religious practices. Priests, Pandits and Granthis were all provided within the campus to attune Indians to their religion. Mohan Singh even felt that "the British were very clever. They were able to exploit religion to win the loyalty of the soldiers."²⁰ Little did the British realize that the effectiveness of the national movement in the army had seeped in a subtle way and British stood disarrayed and disrupted when even the favourite of the martial races stood apart from them and stood firm not to be exploited in the name of pride that was bestowed on them to keep them on their side.

20. *Ibid.*, p.41.

KINGSHIP CONTESTED AT THE MARGINS OF BRITISH COLONIAL INDIA WITH REFERENCE TO NORTH-WEST HIMALAYAN KINGDOM OF BUSHAHR

*Balkrishan Shivram**

The structural development and political reactions of the lesser known South Asians' "little kingdoms" to colonial rule have achieved an astounding place in historical research over the past couple of decades. As interaction with colonial setting intensified, the *rajas* underwent a transition from independent rulers at the apex of indigenous political structure to participants in the British imperial enterprise.¹ This succinct article traces the intricacies of the dialectical process that led to such a paradoxical result in the north-western Himalayan kingdom of Bushahr (Bashahr) which was among the largest of the western Himalayan polities with tract of approximately 4500 sq. km. and a population in 1901 of 80582 (1892 of 64345). The steep mountain and dense forest limited cultivation, leading its inhabitants to pursue an agro-pastoral lifestyle, which was evidently supplemented by trade between Tibet and Kinnaur. Bushahr's easternmost region of Kinnaur had close ties with west Tibet which were largely curtailed after the altercation with China in 1962 AD.

After decline of Tibetan in the twelfth century the *thakur* of Kamru (in Kinnaur) established his rule over neighbouring tract, thereby placing the kingdom's foundation. Capitalizing on the flow of goods between India and Tibet, the *thakur* of Kamru gradually extended their rule towards westward along the ancient trade route that followed the river Sutlej, eventually establishing their capitals at Sarahan in summer and Rampur in winter. Contrary to the bulk of the region's polities, whose rulers trace their ancestors from Rajput lineage in the plains, Bushahr's rulers—alike to Kangra—thus emerged from among the original inhabitants of the mountains.² The establishment of political authority over the dispersed

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1. For a fresh review on the topic in broad-spectrum, see B. Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and Their States*, Cambridge University, 2004.
2. Hutchison, J. and J.P. Vogel, *History of the Panjab Hill States*, Delhi, 1999, p. 111.

communities of Bushahr was achieved through the incorporation of their political idioms under a ritual super-structure.³ The communities of the northwestern Himalayas in general were organized in socio-political units consisting of “a rural, dominant-case, territorial assembly organized as a militia, or *khund*, and ruled by a god conceived of as a king.”⁴ Peter Sutherland rightly argues that there was a multi-leveled political structure of autonomous units ruled over by deities, and managed by local leaders.⁵ During sixteenth-seventeenth century local socio-political units in Bushahr

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3. In South Asia and especially in classical Hindu polities, the relation between kings and gods is much clearer, especially after the important work of Dirks (1987), Inden (1990), Pollock (1991), and Stein (1980). In classical Indian thought, kings are divine because they physically incorporate part of the divine substance of Vishnu. In the western Himalayas, we seem to be confronted by a socio-cultural system which, although it shares many assumptions and rituals with classical Hindu polities, is also different in fundamental ways. In some parts of the region, gods literally rule as kings. They are referred to as kings (*raja*), and rule from their temples, which are located at the conceptual centre of what Peter Sutherland (2003) calls their “very little kingdoms”. Elsewhere, local gods are clearly subordinate to human kings or even to contemporary secular authorities, yet retain a range of “royal” attributes and associated rituals (Galey 1991-92). For more detailed discussion see, Nicholas B. Dirks, *The Hollow Crown*, Cambridge, 1987; Ronald Inden, *Imagining India*, Oxford, 1990; Sheldon I. Pollock, *The Ramayana of Valmiki : An epic of ancient India*, Volume III, *Aranyakanda*, introduction, translation and annotation by Pollock, edited by Robert P. Goldman, Princeton, 1991; Burton Stein, *Peasant, State and Society in Medieval South India*, Delhi, 1980; J.C. Galey, “Hindu kingship in its ritual realm”, *Himalaya : Past and Present*, Vol. II, 1991-92, pp. 173-237.
 4. The classical Indian kings were clearly human though at the same time they were substantially identified with their lineage gods and goddesses. Indeed, the king and the god were, in effect, “alter-egos” of each other. Christopher Fuller succinctly characterizes the relationship between kings and their lineage deities : “At one level, therefore, the state deity-cum-king was displayed as a sovereign unity, so that the human king participated in the deity's royal divinity. At another level and simultaneously, the state deity was displayed as the supreme ruler who had delegated authority to his separate, inferior regent, the human king. The court assemblies therefore provided an exemplary illustration of the king's double relationship with the state deity, whereby he was both a form of the deity and the latter's human representative on earth”. Christopher J. Fuller, *The Camphor Flame : Popular Hinduism and Society in India*, Princeton, 1992.
 5. For detail exposition, see Peter Sutherland, “Very little kingdoms : the calendrical order of west Himalayan Hindu polity”, in G. Berkemer and M. Frenz, eds., *Sharing Sovereignty — Royalty on a Small Scale : The little kingdom in South Asia*, Berlin, 2003, pp. 31-61.

were assimilated into a state-level polity through an affirmation of their subordinate status to the state goddess, Bhimakali, in the capital of Sarahan. Consequently, "nothing was done by the *raja* or the *wazirs* without first consulting the oracle of the goddess."⁶ This supreme rule of Bhimakali reveals the peculiar structure of kingship in Bushahr. Even though safeguarded by numerous devices designed to provide him with an air of sanctity, the *raja* in person was far from indispensable. His privileges for example include exclusive right to free subjects from oaths and the infamous prerogative of decreeing forced labour (*begaar*) throughout the region.⁷ Moderately, it was the institution itself that was imperative to the cosmological structure of the region's communities.⁸

I

There are relatively few textual sources for Bushahr's history attributable to reasons such as several of the state documents were burnt during the Gorkha occupation of 1811-15 AD. We are thus enforced to rely largely on information procured by British officials and travelers' accounts that can be cross-referenced with Tibetan sources, oral histories and contemporary interpretations of rituals and local traditions to provide a more comprehensive account of its history. Bushahr acquired regional prominence in the late seventeenth century under *raja* Kehari Singh, the most celebrated military leader in its history. Most of events from his regime are commemorated in various folk songs of Himachal Pradesh. Paying nominal tribute to his Mughal (Mongol/or Timurid) overlords, the *raja* allied with the Tibetans in their conquest of Ladakh—controlled West Tibet in 1681-83 AD.⁹ As a result, Bushahr acquired upper Kinnaur, and privileged commercial access to the Tibetan highland. A treaty granting free trading rights was signed, thereby laying the foundations for Bushahr's economic advantage as a viable trade centre in the region. Import from Tibet traditionally included salt, borax, *pashm* wool, medicinal herbs and

6. *Gazetteer of Simla District 1888-89*, p. 27.

7. T.R. Joshi, "Notes on the ethnography of the Bashahr State, Simla Hills, Punjab", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. VII (9), 191, I. p. 534.

8. J.C. Galey, "Hindu kingship in its ritual realm", pp. 173-237.

9. *Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteers : Kinnaur*, Ambala, 1971, p. 57; See also, L. Petch, "The Tibetan-Ladakhi-Moghul War of 1681-1683", *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIII (September 1947). At the time of that war there was an alliance and a brief general agreement about friendly relations and the exchange of envoys between Raja Kehari Singh of Bushahr and the government of the 5th Dalai Lama.

healing stones. Exports had included sugar, butter and staples from the plains. The independence of the communities along the Tibetan frontier would prove a recurring obstacle to British attempts at centralization throughout the nineteenth century. Bushahr expanded its rule to the west and subjugated the contested region of Saraj (in Kullu), Rohru and Rawain (in Shimla) during the reign of Raja Ugar Singh (r. 1775-1810 AD).¹⁰ After the Anglo-Gorkha War (1814-16 AD), the East India Company had exhausted its resources and was thus reluctant to administer the Bushahr region directly.¹¹ Accordingly, the Company sought to establish indirect rule over regional polities in compliance with each kingdom's "local practices". Adhering to the East India Company's policy of keeping with "local practice", the Company's envoy to Bushahr found his task noticeably easy. This configuration persisted throughout Mahendra Singh's reign (1815-50 AD).

Nevertheless, British rule did introduce certain changes in Bushahr. The advantage of establishing a direct trade route with the sources of *pashm* wool in West Tibet served British interests, and an attempt was made to attract Tibetan traders to Kotgarh where they had built a factory. The goal was both economic and political as divesting the Sikh-ruled Kashmir of its monopoly on *pashm* wool was intended to weaken Maharaja Ranjit Singh's economic power.¹² The Tibetans would not venture to the low altitude station, however, and the British demands for *pashm* wool had to be met at the annual Lavi Fair in Bushahr's winter capital at Rampur.¹³ The influx of trade enriched the kingdom and enhanced its regional prestige. Despite slight fluctuations in trade, under Mahendra Singh the Lavi Fair had established itself as a significant cultural-economic centre in the region. The fair soon became an arena in which the *raja* expressed his authority. On the other hand EIC's eagerness to increase trade persuaded development work along the country's main trading route, now labeled the "Hindustan-Tibet Road". Tied to the treaty guaranteeing the supply of manpower for British economic pursuits, Bushahr subjects were increasingly employed in road development through royally sanctioned forced labour (*begaar*).

Despite certain setbacks in the process, the influx in trade facilitated the growing prestige of Bushahr and balanced the overbearing presence of

10. J. Singh, *Banks, Gods and Government, 1960-1985*, Stuttgart, 1989, p. 52.

11. Joshi, "Notes on the ethnography of the Bashahr State", pp. 553-54.

12. *Punjab State Gazetteer. 1910: Simla Hill States*, Lahore, 1911, p. 6.

13. J. Rizvi, *Trans-Himalyan Carvanas*, Delhi, 1999, pp. 60-64.

foreigners and their requirements in the *raja's* territories. The kingdom's aristocracy gradually grew accustomed to the EIC's presence despite its excessive demands in comparison with those of their previous Mughal overlords. Nonetheless, British confidence in the existing administrative structure meant that the aristocracy retained a substantial degree of freedom. Indeed, when the flow of *pashm* wool from Tibet was threatened by Zorawar Singh's invasion of West Tibet in 1841 AD, Bushahr and EIC interests converged to procure a fruitful collaboration in defense policy.¹⁴ Finally, since the politically potent rituals of the region persisted unhampered, its rulers continued to perceive themselves as independent sovereigns. It is thus, hardly surprising to find the *raja* writing to the Governor-General that "the British government and that of China are equally great and powerful." The ambiguous insinuations of such remarks were overlooked for the time being as British interests lay elsewhere, leaving the leaders of Bushahr free to pursue their own interests.¹⁵

II

In 1850, Raja Mahendra Singh died and was succeeded by his son Shamsher Singh (1838-1914 AD), the *raja* being a minor; the affairs of state were managed as before, by the hereditary Poari *wazir*. The remarkable affinity with the situation during the late *raja's* accession was however countered by the stark difference in the EIC's policy under Governor-General Dalhousie (1848-56 AD). Intent on enhancing revenue and productivity the British EIC's government appointed Shyam Lal "an experienced Tehsildar"¹⁶ from Nurpur to devise a revenue settlement for the state in 1852 AD. Shyam Lal implemented land measurement techniques he had acquired during his previous post in the Punjab which proved unsuitable for the mountainous environment of Bushahr and resulted in a "heavy and unequal assessment". As a result, the nobility was placed in a precarious position between their subjects' plight and the need to appease their superiors.¹⁷ Furthermore, taxes were to be realized in cash, leading the

14. Sukhdev Singh Charak, "Extracts from General Zorawar Singh", in Alex McKay (ed.), *The History of Tibet*, London, 2003, II, pp. 750-56.

15. For an overview of British policy, see, D. Washbrook, "India 1818-1860", in A. Porter, (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, Oxford, 1999, pp. 395-422.

16. G. Barnes, "Memorandum on the district of the Bushahr", in *Selection from the records of the government of Punjab and its dependencies*, Vol. V (4), Lahore, 1861, pp. 77-134.

17. G. Barnes, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

barter-based economy to bankruptcy.¹⁸ Lastly, these changes occurred alongside the customary enforcement of royal taxation for Bhimakali as state officials toured villages collecting agricultural yields. Bushahr's subsequent failure to procure taxes induced the Superintendent Hill States to assume control of the state by appointing Purus Ram a *vakil* from Shimla, as Manager in 1856 AD.¹⁹ Despite his limited success in meeting revenue demands, Purus Ram quickly became an unaccepted in Bashahr.²⁰ The *vakil* abused his powers by taking bribes, confiscating property and embezzling the collected revenue. Meanwhile, the displeased peasantry found a champion in the *raja's* half-brother, Mian Fateh Singh (1827-76 AD), who received their support for rebellious actions. Familiar with the presence of the *raja's* political superiors in their territories, the protestors also sent an envoy to the Governor-General, demanding the annulment of the new revenue settlements. Having exhausted their options the peasantry finally resorted to the region's traditional form of social protest the—*Dhoom*.²¹ In light of these events the Shua and Kool *wazirs* withdrew their support of the *raja*, who was left solely with the unwavering support of his oldest allies, the Poaris. News of the events reached Shimla shortly thereafter and arrangements were made to send veteran official G.C. Barnes to quell the disturbance. Upon arrival Barnes conducted a lengthy enquiry with all sides involved, and eventually solved the problem by enforcing a nearly complete return to the previous revenue system. The peasants returned to their homes after Barnes assured them of their legal rights and duties, leaving the British envoy to deal with Bushahr's administration. After returning to Shimla, Barnes submitted a report on the events, and his contribution to the resolution of the crisis. On a subsequent visit to Bushahr, Barnes professed amazement at the wasteful use of timber : contractors "have cut timber just as they pleased, without let or hindrance from the *raja*, the real proprietor of the forest."²² Barnes immediately set basic guidelines for the regulation of forest management; rangers bearing their own distinct badges were drafted to approve and supervise tree felling,

18. *Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteers : Kinnaur*, p. 236.

19. Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 98; see also, C.L. Dutta, *The Raj and the Shimla Hill States*, Jalandhar, 1997, p. 325.

20. *Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteers : Kinnaur*, p. 237.

21. Chetan Singh, "The Dhoom in Himachal Pradesh" in Luxam Thakur (ed.), *Where Mörts and Mountain Gods Meet*, Shimla, 2002, pp. 107-16.

22. Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

and the previously cut timber accumulated along the banks of the Sutlej was proclaimed the property of the *raja*. These rudimentary rules, it was hoped would "make the *raja* the richest chief in the hills."²³

The sale of timber for commercial profit in Bushahr first occurred in conjunction with a temporary recession in *pashm* wool trade in the 1840s AD.²⁴ During the next two decades, private contractors randomly felled trees for a nominal fee paid directly to the *raja*.²⁵ Under Governor-General Dalhousie, The British government of India took special interest in the timber reserves of the western Himalayas in order to meet the growing demands for the *deodar* wood used to construct railway cars.²⁶ In 1862 AD a special envoy to Bushahr reported enthusiastically on the commercial potential of its forests. Noting the *raja's* difficulties in regulating cuttings, the envoy recommended the government to assume direct control over the forests. Within two years massive tracts of the forest were brought under the British government of India's control throughout the Punjab, and placed under the supervision of a Conservator of Forests.²⁷ Economically exploitative, the agreements over forests introduced a foreign agency that undermined the *raja's* authority and disrupted his subjects' traditional modes of subsistence. Control of the forests was made over to the British government of India for a period of 50 years in return for an annual sum of Rs.10,000, and a nominal fee per tree cut. A revision of the agreement second time in 1877 AD further empowered the department's officials granting them a status akin to local rulers.²⁸ Forest Officers were authorized to grant *zamindars* the right to break forest tracts for cultivation, they would distribute grazing rights and permits allowing forest access; and even acted as employers providing work for the locals in various tasks.²⁹ By relinquishing its hold on forests Bushahr lost its chief natural resources to a political entity that undermined its traditional forms of authority. Shamsher Singh's gallant attempts to maintain political power under

23. Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

24. Dutta, *The Raj and the Shimla Hill States*, pp. 327-28.

25. Barnes, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-28; *Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteers : Kinnaur*, p. 150.

26. *Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteers : Kinnaur*, p. 150.

27. *Gazetteer of Chamba State 1904*, pp. 110, 132.

28. C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads relating to India and the Neighbouring Countries*, Calcutta, 1931, Vol. I, pp. 72-77.

29. G.F. Pearson, *Report on the administration of the forest department in the several provinces under the government of India 1870-71*, Calcutta, 1872, pp. 6-7.

unfavourable conditions went unappreciated by the British government of India which had grown impatient with the *raja* and began searching for alternative leaders more attuned to British policy. This end was achieved after lengthy negotiations, when Shamsheer Singh was finally persuaded to delegate his political, judicial and magisterial functions to his son, Tikka Raghunath Singh, in 1887 AD while allowing *raja* to retain the "purely religious" functions.

The assumption of power by Tikka Raghunath Singh in 1887 AD dramatically altered the political balance in Bushahr, as Shamsheer Singh's appeasing attitude towards the *wazirs* was discarded in favour of an indigenously centralized regime. Once in power, the Tikka embarked on a series of audacious reforms : a preliminary code of law was established, officials' wages were fixed, the *wazirs*' authority challenged by appointing *naib-tahsildars*, and the annual duty of *begar* was shortened to one month instead of six.³⁰ Finally, the revenue settlements established for Rampur (1887), Rohru (1890) and Chini (1894) tehsils doubled the revenue figures of the 1850s settlement.³¹ Local identity, however, prevented a smooth transition to the centralized state that Raghunath Singh sought to establish. Officials sent to commence operations in the direction of a revenue settlement were met with resistance at various levels.³² Village headmen (*negi* in Kinnaur) confronted newly appointed *naib-tehsildars*, while regional deities expressed communal resentment to assessment operations.³³

III

The political turmoil in Bushahr was worsening further after the sudden death of Tikka Raghunath Singh in 1898 AD. As far as the British government of India was concerned, the resumption of effective control over Bushahr by the *raja*, "whose monomania is to acquire and hoard money, beyond which he takes little or no interest in worldly affairs", was out of the question. The late Tikka's powers were therefore acquired by Rai Mangat Ram, who was appointed Manager of Bushahr.³⁴ Removed from political power Shamsheer Singh retained his religious functions as head of state. The death of Raghunath Singh's only son a short while later, however, set the stage for the return of the king. Since the question of succession

30. Singh, *Banks, Gods and Government*, pp. 20-2, 92-4.

31. *Punjab State Gazetteer 1910 : Simla Hill States*, pp. 46, 50-51.

32. Singh, *Banks, Gods and Government*, p. 38.

33. Joshi, "Notes on the ethnography of the Bashahr state", pp. 558-61.

34. *Punjab State Gazetteer 1910 : Simla Hill States*, p. 11.

was now reopened and the *raja* officially put in charge of choosing his successor, a bitter power struggle revolving around power, status and rights soon inflamed the state.

The contestation of authority further extended after appointment of Mr. A.J. Gibson as Assistant to the Deputy Conservator of Forests in 1902 AD by British government of India that marked the beginning of the intensifying government control over Bushahr forests. Meanwhile the palace was seen divested of control over forests, with the trade traffic in constant decline and the collection of revenue out of reach, Shamsheer Singh devised a new plan to regain control over his kingdom. First of all, the *raja* gave up resuscitate alliances with the weakened *wazirs* of Kinnaur, and turned to the Kool clan. The latter's Garhwali origins facilitated the adoption of Kunwar Surendra Shah of Garhwali as heir to the *raja* in 1907 AD. Arriving from a state that had long since managed its own forests successfully, Surendra Shah was a veritable threat to the Forest Departments interests in Bushahr. The quietude of the Himalayan heights was shattered on 24 August 1909 while an unidentified assailant shot at Gibson—whilst he was touring forests along the Pandrabis Range north-east of Rampur—and fled, leaving the officer lightly injured and his dog dead. Rai Mangat Ram's subsequent investigation confirmed Gibson's suspicions that "the Garhwal party" was behind the attempt. Despite Surendra Shah's sound arguments in a petition to the Superintendent Hill States he was banned from residing in Bushahr or his native homeland and decided upon his removal, finalizing the exclusion of Surendra Shah from the *gaddi*. At the same time because of these events, Bushahr came under the direct management of British official 1910 AD. By the end of 1913, the 70-year-old Shamsheer Singh had formally adopted Mian Padam Singh, an illegitimate son of the *raja*, as his heir.³⁵ The colonial milieu had subdued the state and made it conform to its policies.

After death of *raja* Shamsheer Singh in August 1914 AD, installation of the *raja* Padam Singh was carried out in November 1914 AD by Lieutenant-Colonel, L.A. Burlton, the Superintendent Hill States. Shortly after the ceremonies, the coffer of the Bhimakali temple were forced open—the keys being in the possession of Surendra Shah and a treasure horde amounting to more than Rs. 600,000 was transferred to the *raja's* private treasury in Rampur.³⁶ Reuniting "political" and "religious" authorities,

35. Report on the *Administration of the Bashahr State for the year (March 13th, 1914–March 13, 1915)*, Shimla, 1915, p. 2.

36. Report on the *Administration of the Bashahr State....*, p. 3.

Padam Singh made his way to the original home of the Bushahr *rajas* in Kamru for a second coronation that was required to legitimize his rule.³⁷ In a sense, order was restored to the troubled kingdom as a ruler acceptable to both the colonial milieu and the "fraternity of hill chiefs" was placed on the *gaddi*. However, the new *raja* of Bushahr proved far from a complacent functionary. Independent of old alliances, Padam Singh pursued his own agenda. A creation of the *raj*, the *raja* soon turned against his masters. In 1922 AD the government of India's lease on forests was revised on terms that put an end to the exorbitant measures that had strained Bashahr's economy for half a century. The annual payment of Rs.10,000 was increased tenfold, and the sums received per tree cutting updated. Lastly, a newly established Forest Board, presided over by the *raja*, was now to address local grievances related to the forest department. Padam Singh also finalized revenue settlements for Bushahr in 1928 AD, and successfully addressed the challenges of the twentieth century into independence. The *raja's* legacy left an indelible impression on the region, which is reflected in his son's position who remained the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh for five times.

37. J.Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

NEW ENVIRONMENT AND ITS POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITION AMONG THE CHAMARS IN THE COLONIAL PUNJAB

Harjeet Singh*

The Punjab was annexed by the British in 1849. It was a new land, to be ordered and settled, moulded by the hands of a chosen few. The way to a concrete expression of Victorian imperial dreams was opened. Here was a land of warlike tribes, sturdy peasants, defeated and waiting to be transformed into a model of imperial efficiency and administration.¹ The Punjab witnessed innovation in the political, administrative, economic and social spheres which had already swept the rest of the country.² The new influences gradually undermined the traditional institutions and customary obligation and it became possible for individuals and groups to change their hereditary occupations and consequently their social standing.

Sources and mechanics of change in the Punjab, having a bearing on the position of *chamars* can be studied with reference to the processes in the spheres of agrarian and urban economy, transport and communication, education and socio-religious reforms. These changes produced gradual alterations and readjustments in the society of the Punjab. These developments put the *chamars* of the Punjab face to face with a new situation and under which some of them were successful in improving their socio-economic conditions during the late 19th and early 20th century.

The agrarian society received the immediate attention of the British administrators who believed that the landholders who dominated the rural society could provide a stable and loyal base in the Punjab.³ The province was mainly the land of small cultivators most of whom were the peasant proprietors, who cultivated their own land. For instance, in 1860 in Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Sialkot districts the average holding was 15 acres and the total number of

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1. Kenneth. W. Jones, *Arya Dharam*, p.6.

2. Ravinder Kumar, *Western India in the Nineteenth Century*, p.18.

3. Dungen, P.H.M. Vanden, *The Punjab Tradition*, p. 299.

proprietors was 1,94,052 out of whom 1,83,183 or 94.39 per cent were the peasant-proprietors.⁴

The Punjab Census of 1868 recorded only 3 per cent of the total population as agricultural labourers.⁵ The later Census reports showed a remarkable growth in their number. The proportion of agricultural labourers in 1901 was 8 per cent of the total population of the Punjab.⁶ In 1911 it rose to 12 per cent.⁷ This proportion decreased during the decade 1911-21 from 12 to 10 per cent. Their proportion again rose in 1931 to 15 per cent.⁸ In 1911, of the total agricultural labourers of the British Punjab, 47 per cent were concentrated in the Central Punjab.⁹ In 1931, this proportion was 49 per cent. The agrarian policies of the British government further strengthened the position of the self cultivating proprietors and vested landed rights in the actual tillers of the soil through various enactments, even the tenants got a legal recognition and a bargaining power that they did not enjoy before.¹⁰ Encouraged by this policy of the state, the traditionally servile menials also began turning to agriculture. Among the agricultural labourers *chamar* and *chuhra* castes constituted largest number. Among these two castes even, *chamars* were larger. In 1911, 39 per cent of the actual working *chamars* were engaged in agriculture and among them 19 per cent were field labourers.¹¹

In 1921, their proportion in agriculture was 35 per cent and among them 16 per cent were field labourers.¹² In 1931 their proportion in agriculture rose to 45 per cent and among them 30 per cent were field labourers.¹³ This rise was due to the fact that the agriculture was nobler and clean occupation than that of leather working.

The British administrators realized the great agricultural potential of the

4. H.C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p.65.

5. Bhupinder Kaur, "Distribution and Caste Composition of the Agricultural labourers of the Punjab", *Punjab History Conference Proceedings*, Patiala, March, 1983, p.225.

6. *Report on the Census of India 1901*, XV, p. 375.

7. *Report on the Census of India, 1911*, Vol. XIV, p.382.

8. *Report on the Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XVII, Punjab, Pt.II, p.161.

9. *Report on the Census of India, 1911*, Vol. XIV, Punjab, Pt.II, p.304.

10. Kessinger, Tom G., *Vilyatpur (1848-1968) Social and Economic Change in a North Indian Village*, pp. 29-31.

11. The absolute number of actual working *chamars* was 471881 and among them 92454 were agricultural labourers. *Report on the Census of India, 1911*, Vol. XIV, p. 381.

12. The absolute number of *chamar* agricultural labourers was 72648. *Report on the Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XV, p. 381.

13. The absolute number of *chamar* agricultural labourers was 105475. *Report on the Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XVII, p. 221.

Punjab with its uncultivated plains, under-utilized water resources and industrious peasantry. The new rulers sought to open the province as a market for the produce of British labour and develop it into a major supplier of raw materials and food stuffs to meet the growing requirements of industrial capitalism in Britain.¹⁴ To mobilize the agricultural potentials of the Punjab the British encouraged the cultivators to adopt new varieties of crops and new cropping pattern, besides new implements made of iron and aluminium for the Persian wheel, sugar-cane press and the plough.¹⁵ For the preservation and increase in the productive power of the soil the devastating activities of the *chos* or the intermittent hill streams and the resultant water-logging too were checked.

The major contribution to agricultural production, however, was in the sphere of irrigation schemes to utilize the water resources of the rivers of the Punjab.¹⁶ The Upper Bari Doab canal, irrigating the districts of Amritsar and Lahore, was the first to be constructed after annexation.¹⁷ The subsequent irrigation projects aimed at colonization of the vast tracks of barren land were in the Chaj, Rachna, and Bari Doabs popularly named as Lyallpur, Shahpur, Montgomery, Nili Bar and the Ganji Bar Colonies.¹⁸ There were nine Canal colonies in all and they absorbed the available lands of the Bari, Rachna and the Chaj Doabs. The Colonies became 'virtual human laboratory as castes, clans and tribes from different parts of the province converged on the new lands and unhinged the traditional moorings of village society, and freed people for intercourse in the wider world.¹⁹ It became a major demographic outlet for the people in thickly populated districts of the Punjab who moved out to colonies in the newly irrigated areas. The explicit aims for Colonization were relief from population congestion, settlement of the land with the most efficient agriculturists from Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Lahore and improvement in standard of living of rural population.²⁰

In 1901 the *chamars* and the *chuhars* were quite often working as general labourers rather than as sweepers or scavengers or leather workers or combining their traditional occupations with work as labourers. Among those

14. Domin, Dolores, *India in 1857-59*, pp. 24-25.

15. H.C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p.66.

16. Ali, Imran, *Imperial Rule in the Punjab: 1885-1947*, p.3.

17. Douie, James, *The Punjab, North-Western Frontier Province and Kashmir*, pp. 132-33.

18. Ali, Imran, *Imperial Rule in the Punjab: 1885-1947*, pp. 8-61.

19. *Ibid.*, viii.

20. H.C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p. 67.

castes listed as menial castes in 1901,²¹ some 34,257 had cultivation as a subsidiary occupation and 17,615 showed agriculture as their principle means of livelihood. This type of change of occupation for the menial castes was, of course, the familiar means of changing status in the corporate caste manner. Turning towards agriculture undertakings were nobler than menial duties, this could be achieved by migration to the Canal colonies, or by work on the railroads just being built, or by migration to the towns and cities for factory work.

Of the castes known to migrate a great deal,²² the *chamar* caste was second only to the *jats* and were known as wanderers in most districts of the Punjab. There were 41,944 *chamars* immigrants to Chenab Colony in 1911 which constituted 4 per cent of their population in Punjab. The development of the Canal colonies was accompanied by the growth of new towns, such as Gojra, a railroad station in the Chenab Colony which had also become a '*mandi*' or market for agricultural produce. In the Canal colonies new *mandis* were established. Other towns like Lyallpur, Montgomery and Fazilka flourished. The colonists of Lyallpur also gave money to other districts and there was a great deal of gold coins and bullion in the Canal colonies. Much money was expended on land purchases, even in the Canal colonies, therefore, people were being affected by the introduction of the market economy by the British.

This, and the use of money along with the traditional exchange of goods and services, helped some of the menial castes in their striving for upward mobility. Within first ten years the Chenab colony alone had attracted a good number of people from among the artisan castes, particularly the *chamars*, *Kumhars*, and the *Tarkhans*. By 1904, there were, among others, about 27,000 *chamars*, 19,000 *kumhars* and over 17,000 *Tarkhans*.²³

Colonization was accompanied by the development of the means of transportation-railways and roads. The newly annexed province had to be linked up with the ports and other important cities. In 1862, the first railway line was opened in the Punjab between Amritsar and Lahore. It was 23 miles long.²⁴ The length of railways increased to 1050 miles in 1881 and to 4000 miles in 1901.²⁵ By the end of the 1870s Amritsar was linked up with Bombay at a distance of 1253 miles, with Calcutta at a distance of 1225 miles, and

21. *Report on the Census of India, 1901*, Vol. XVII, Pt. I, p. 365.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

23. *Gazetteer Chenab Colony, 1904*, pp. 57-58.

24. H.C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p. 68.

25. *Report on the Census of India, 1901*, Pt. I, pp. 15-16.

with Karachi at a distance of 750 miles. By 1880, the railways connected Lahore also with several other towns in the south, west and the north. In 1883, the link between Delhi and Peshawar was completed. By 1916, the major urban centres and the Canal colonies of Lyallpur, Sargodha and Multan were connected by railways. By 1939, the length of the railway track connecting all parts of the province was nearly 6215 miles.²⁶

The road communication, though much less extensive than the railways, also contributed towards linking different parts of the region. The first step in this direction was the extension of the Grand Trunk Road between Calcutta and Peshawar which ran more or less parallel to the railways. In 1863-64 it passed through the major urban centres in the province, like Karnal, Ambala, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Lahore, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi and Jhelum.²⁷ Several feeder roads branched off from the main highway.²⁸ The length of the metalled roads increased from 3321 miles in 1924-25 to 3898 miles in 1931-32 and to 4536 miles in 1938-39.²⁹ Railways and road communication made migration of people from one part of the country to the other possible and hence facilitated to improve their economic prospects. Railways were also instrumental in moving surplus produce from the Punjab and also contributed towards greater interaction between towns, cities and villages. They offered an equalisation of prices throughout the province, created new avenues of employment. There could be faster movements of grain and other food stuffs during the period of scarcity and natural calamities.³⁰

Development of transportation system, particularly the railways, led to commercialization of agriculture. The agriculturists now did not cultivate land for home consumption alone. They grew specialized crops such as wheat, cotton, sugarcane and oilseeds on commercial scale for sale in the market. Imported manufactured goods with cotton piece goods as a major item, were brought to the rural areas of the Punjab.³¹

At any rate, with the extension of the market economy and the expansion of cash nexus, villages no longer remained the relatively isolated economic units.³² The inter-communication between villages and urban centres increased

26. Khosla, G.S., *The Growth of the Railway System in the Punjab*, p. 22.

27. Douie, James, *The Punjab, North-Western Frontier Province and Kashmir*, pp. 123-28.

28. *Report on the Census of India, 1921*, Pt. I, p. 17.

29. *Report on the Census of India, 1931*, p. 49.

30. Saini, B.S., *Social and Economic History of the Punjab (1901-1939)*, p. 341.

31. Banga Indu, *Karachi and its Hinterland Under Colonial Rule*, p. 341.

32. *Imperial Gazetteer 1908*, Vol. IX, p.308.

with much greater pace than ever before.³³

In this process, there sprang up a new class of middlemen who started purchasing grain and other products of villages to take to city markets and bring back manufactured goods. These goods replaced the ones manufactured by the village artisans and thus led them to discard their traditional occupations and to become agriculturist labourers.

With the passage of time, changes took place in the form of payment to the *chamars*. As in the case of other *kamins*, *chamars* were deprived of their customary dues called *haqqsep* in favour of cash payments.³⁴ In Jalandhar, for instance, the relationship between the *chamars* and the agriculturists were sometimes so strained that often the *chamars* were not allowed to retain the skin of dead cattle which they earlier received as a part of their customary dues.³⁵ The tendency to shirk payments to their *kamins* was growing among the cultivators.³⁶ The disputes over rights or payments was liable to end in a breach of relationship between the cultivator and the *chamar* and eventually leading to strike and boycott against the cultivator. These new developments made it possible for individuals or group to change their occupations and role and consequently their social standing.³⁷

The process of industrialization is identified as a radical process of social change. It, in turn, implies a shift in the economic base of society from agriculture to manufacturing. Industrialization not only introduced division of labour and functional differentiation but also brought about changes in the social, economic and political institutions and stimulated new ideas and thoughts.

Industrialization in Punjab dismantled the indigenous industries. The textile industry which supported the largest number of artisans was perhaps the worst affected of the indigenous manufactures.³⁸ The inflow of cotton piece-goods increased steadily over the years after annexation. By the second decade of colonial rule, the well-to-do agriculturists in villages had begun clothing themselves in English cotton. Till the end of the 1860s the import of

33. Kessinger, Tom G., *Vilyatpur (1848-1968) Social and Economic Change in a North Indian Village*, p.106.

34. Himadri, Banerjee, *The Agrarian Society of the Punjab (1849-1901)*, p.180.

35. *District Gazetteer Julundhar 1904*, Vol. XIV-A, p. 212.

36. Sunita Mahajan, *The Chamars of the Punjab*, p. 29.

37. Himadri, Banerjee, *The Agrarian Society of the Punjab (1849-1901)*, p. 305.

38. Anstey, Vera, *The Economic Development of India*, pp. 208-09.

cotton cloth in the Punjab was 40,000 maunds a year.³⁹ By the 1880s, however, the import of cotton cloth between 1881 and 1884 was around 1.1 million maunds valuing over 13 crores of rupees. The value of the imported cotton goods per year was more than the value of the entire output of the indigenous handloom weaving industry of the Punjab.⁴⁰ Cotton textile industry did, however, survive but its development was arrested. Weavers left with no alternative and they had to combine the profession of weaving with agriculture or field labour to make a living.

The leather-workers of the villages and towns were also experiencing difficulties in the face of the new economic condition. By the 1930s the lorries and the railways had considerably reduced the dependence on horses and horse driven carts and tongas and hence reduction in the demand for harness and saddlery. The military and police departments also began to curtail their saddlery requirement by adopting mechanical modes of transportation and movement.⁴¹ Furthermore, the demand for European type of footwear was on the increase with which the leather-workers of the Punjab were unable to compete. The factories which earlier used leather beltings replaced those by more durable and cheaper canvas beltings. The increasing demand for leather in the international market added further to the difficulties of the local leather workers. Almost all the available good quality leather was purchased from the market for export which left the local leather-workers with inferior quality material, rendering them incapable of competing with the market trends.⁴² The inadequacy of the financial resources of the *Mochis* and the *chamars* increased their dependence on the middlemen who purchased tanned leather from them at very low rates. They had also to pay commission to the middlemen at the rate of one *anna* per rupee. Sometimes, the traders in leather sold hides to the leather-workers on the condition that the finished goods would be sold only through them. They also charged one rupee per maund of leather as shop rent.⁴³

Gradual increase in the import of dressed leather too affected the tanners adversely. In 1909-10, for instance, about 5,000 maunds of leather was imported into the Punjab which gradually increased to 20,000 maunds by 1936-37. The export of leather from the Punjab correspondingly declined

39. H.C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p. 71.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 73.

41. Anand, Nihal Chand, *The Punjab Alienation of Land Act No. XIII, 1900*, pp. 19-20.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

43. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-36.

during this period from 26,000 maunds in 1909-10 to 18,000 maunds in 1936-37. In 1928 a village tanning demonstration party was formed to acquaint the tanners with new and improved techniques of tanning so as to improve the quality of leather. Practically no step to improve the financial conditions of the workers in leather was taken which compelled them to turn towards agriculture as field labourer.

Division of labour and functional differentiation on account of industrialization disrupted the complementarity of agriculture and industry. At the outset of the colonial rule, the agriculturists were dependent on village artisans for their requirements of the implements. In the late nineteenth century new implements were available in the market.⁴⁴ The new situation resulted in the decline of the regular income of the *Chamars*, *Tarkhans*, *Lohars* and *Mochis*. At many places, the *chamar's* duty as village servant was reduced to mending old leather articles.⁴⁵ By 1890s the *chamars* were no longer the regular *sepidars* in the districts of Amritsar, Jalandhar, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi. A large number of them left tanning which was now done by a small number of tanners in urban areas only. The village leather-workers generally made articles from the tanned leather purchased from the market.⁴⁶ Wherever the system of *sep* was fully or partly in operation the customary dues in kind were generally being discarded in favour of cash payments.⁴⁷ Cash rates prevailed in at least half of the villages surveyed in the Punjab by the wages survey commission in the beginning of the twentieth century.

The first regular wages survey of 1912 reported that in 58 per cent villages of the Punjab purely cash rates were in existence. In about 40 per cent of the villages partly cash and partly grain rates and in the remaining 2 per cent villages purely grain rates prevailed.⁴⁸ The per centage of village with cash wages rose further to 61 in 1927 and to 67 in 1932. The breaking up of the traditional relations was, nevertheless, slow. The *chamars* had begun to look for other avenues and opportunities provided particularly by factory industry and modern education.

The development of factory industry in the Punjab, on the whole, was

44. *Report on the Census of the Punjab 1931*, pt.1, p. 35.

45. Kessinger, Tom G., *Vilyatpur (1848-1968) Social and Economic Change in a North Indian Village*, p.159.

46. H.C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p.76.

47. Desai, A.R., *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, p. 95.

48. *First wages survey 1912*, p. 6.

characterized by small units with rather limited capital.⁴⁹ In the Punjab there were only thirty-four factories in 1893 and in 1903 the number of such factories rose to 188. During 1921-31 there was 77.10 per cent increase in the number of industrial units in the province. In 1921 there were 279 factories which increased to 640 in 1930.⁵⁰ There was an expansion in industries during the 1930s also. In 1940 the number of industrial concerns was about 900.⁵¹ On the whole, the Punjab could not be termed as an industrially developed province.

The new educational opportunities introduced by the British brought some relief to the menials. To begin with the *chamars* occupied one of the lowest position in the caste and class hierarchy and were forbidden in the Hindu scriptures to acquire literacy.⁵² Moreover, the jobs which they performed never made them realize the necessity of acquiring literacy because there were the functions of inherited skills requiring no formal education.⁵³ The high castes objected to the admission of the members of low castes to educational institutions because of the physical contamination supposed to be involved in touching them. However, after annexation of Punjab, the British established the department of education under a Director of Public Instruction in 1854. Urdu was adopted as the medium of instructions and English was to be taught at the district level schools. The educational institutions founded by the government correspond to three levels of primary, secondary, and higher education, consisting of middle and high schools and colleges.

By 1867-68 there were more than 1900 educational institutions of the government including the government college at Lahore and over 700 other 'aided' institutions. The number of students was over 88,000, over 80 per cent of whom were in government institutions.⁵⁴ In 1903-04 there were over 2900 primary schools, 269 middle schools and 110 high schools. There were 15 arts and 3 professional colleges. In 1920 the middle schools numbered 7,865, and the number of secondary schools was 454. In 1902, there were only 10 colleges; the number rose to 40 in 1938.⁵⁵ In 1921-22 there were 74,000 boys and girls in unrecognized institutions and over 5,50,000 in government institutions.⁵⁶ The government also made itself concerned with

49. *Report on the Census of the Punjab, 1911*, Pt. I, p. 9.

50. *Report on the Census of the Punjab, 1931*, Pt. I, p. 41.

51. *Report on the Census of the Punjab, 1951*, Pt. I-A, pp. 60-70.

52. Mukherji, A.B., *The Chamars of Uttar Pradesh*, p. 73.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

54. H.C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p.82.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 82.

56. Trevaskis, Hugh Kennedy, *The Punjab of To-day*, p.142.

the untouchables and opened many schools for their benefit.⁵⁷ In public schools no distinction was observed between the pupils of high and low castes but the untouchable *chamars* were found very rarely in these schools. British also tried to encourage low caste children to attend ordinary schools.⁵⁸ A large number of scholarships were also reserved for them and liberal grants were also given to these schools by the British.⁵⁹ The efforts of the government to spread education were supplemented by those of the Christian missions and other private organizations like the Arya Samajes, the Singh Sabhas and the Muslim Anjumans. The American Presbyterians and Church of England communion were the first to open schools.⁶⁰ By 1901-02 there were 30 such schools in the Punjab. Besides schools the missionaries opened colleges for higher education as well.⁶¹ A few schools were also opened by the socio-religious organizations like Megh High School, Sialkot, the primary school at Gandal, the Dumna primary school at Behlolpur in the Gurdaspur district, Ambala School at Lahore were maintained by Arya Samaj and Dev Samaj.⁶²

The effect of all these measures was an increase in the number of educated *chamars*. In 1891, 5495 *chamars* were literate in the Punjab.⁶³ In 1911, the number of literate *chamars* was 4219.⁶⁴ In 1921, the number of educated *chamars* increased to 5607 and in 1931 it further increased to 7102.⁶⁵

The spread of education by Christian missions had the twin objective of spreading to idea of social equality and to attract more and more people to the fold of Christianity. The missionaries denounced the institution of caste and its built-in system of inequalities. This evoked response from *chamars* and *chuhars*, who were in the largest number among the low castes in the Punjab and were easily prone to conversion. Their response to Christianity was essentially due to the promise of a better social status.⁶⁶

An important aspect in the changing socio-economic environment of the Punjab was the emergence of various socio-religious reform movements

57. Ethne. K. Marengo, *The Transformation of Sikh Society*, p.278.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 279.

59. Saini, B.S., *Social and Economic History of the Punjab (1901-1939)*, p. 172.

60. Jones, Kenneth. W., *Arya Dharam*, p. 8.

61. Saini, B.S., *Social and Economic History of the Punjab (1901-1939)*, p. 71.

62. *Report on the Census of the Punjab, 1911*, p. 531.

63. *Report on the Census of India, 1891*, Vol. XIX, Pt. II, p. 230.

64. *Report on the Census of India, 1911*, p. 138.

65. *Report on the Census of India, 1921*, p. 132; *Report on the Census of India*, p.264.

66. Webster, John C.B., *The Christian community and change in Nineteenth Century North India*, pp. 46-92.

that provided a yet another context for social change. The conversion of the low-castes to Christianity evoked reaction from the Punjab leaders particularly the Aryas.⁶⁷ The Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayanand Saraswati in the Punjab in 1877, attempted to modernize Hinduism.⁶⁸ The D.A.V schools and colleges were founded to counter the challenge of the Christian missionaries.

The Samajes made determined efforts to contain the movement of the lower castes away from Hinduism. Between 1901 and 1911⁶⁹ there were large scale conversion to Sikhism among the *chuhars* and *chamars*: Hinduism lost some 169,103 *chamars* and 158,806 *chuhars* in this period. The Arya Samajists decried social inequalities and encouraged egalitarianism by inter-dining with members of the lower castes and by admitting them to schools.⁷⁰ A subsidiary organization was established at Hoshiarpur known as Dayanand Dalit Udhar Mandal, for social uplift of the lower castes.⁷¹ This was meant to win converts back from Christianity and Sikhism. The *Shuddhi* or ritual purification extended to the lower castes a hope to become an honourable part of the community.

The Sikhs also felt concerned about the Christian missionaries who developed new methods and new dimensions of proselytization. The Zanana Mission extended missionary activities and attempted to reach women in the seclusion of their home. They were worried also about the Sikh rituals and ceremonies giving way to Brahmanical influences.⁷² To withstand these challenges, the community leaders sought to determine the distinct rituals for the Sikhs and to educate the Sikh masses in social and religious matters. The Sikh leaders launched Singh Sabha movement in 1870s. The Singh Sabhas were not only differently oriented but also better organized than the preceding Nirankari and Namdhari movements among the Sikhs. The first Singh Sabha was founded at Amritsar in 1873, followed by that of Lahore in 1879. By the end of the nineteenth century, there were more than one hundred Singh Sabhas all over the Punjab.⁷³ They aimed at the spread of Sikhism, particularly among the low castes, by offering them social equality, inter-dining and entry into Gurudwaras. They achieved spectacular success in the spread of literacy and modern education.⁷⁴

67. Jones, Kenneth. W., *Arya Dharam*, p. 87.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-102.

69. *Report on the Census of India, 1911*, Vol XIV, Pt I, p. 100.

70. Jones, Kenneth. W., *Arya Dharam*, pp. 202-03 and 210-11.

71. H.C. Sharma, *Artisans of the Punjab*, p. 84.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

73. Barrier, N.G., *Sikhs and Their Literature*, xxii.

74. Gurdarshan Singh, *Origin and the Development of the Singh Sabha Movement*, p. 58.

Khalsa College was established at Amritsar in 1892. From 1908 onwards, the Sikh education conference was convened every year to take stock of the progress of literacy in the community. By 1947, the Sikhs had the maximum literacy rate in the Punjab.⁷⁵

Thus, all these socio-religious reform movements in the Punjab remained an important event in context of rising consciousness among the depressed classes and there was strong urge among them to improve their social and economic conditions. The *chamars* disillusioned by the programme of Arya Samaj felt that programme of the social uplift of the untouchables was meant to keep them under the overlordship of the caste Hindus. They decided to organize separately and to work for the alleviation of the difficulties of the *chamars*. Some sections of the *chamars'* population led by educated school teachers organized *Ad-dharm* movement by claiming that as a religion it did not belong to any particular caste, but it was a religion of people who were the original inhabitants of this country. *Ad-dharmis* did a great deal of work by establishing separate schools for the depressed classes' children and enabled them to attend the school through various special scholarships. On the whole, the socio-religious reform movements created an atmosphere which helped the lower castes in becoming conscious of their position and they began to make efforts to come out of the disabilities imposed on them for centuries.

75. Ethne K. Marenco, *The Transformation of Sikh Society*, pp. 97-105.

SOCIAL BASE OF THE PEASANTRY DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY : A SHORT NOTE

P. K. Shukla*

This paper discusses how the social base of the landowning castes of the Punjab was strengthened during the colonial rule to the neglect of low caste poor peasants. An attempt is made to examine the complex agrarian changes brought about both in the irrigated and non-irrigated areas of the province that resulted in the appropriation of the surplus produced by the peasantry. Such accumulation of surplus in the form of rent and land revenue demand failed to generate the capitalist relations in agriculture.

In a major work B.B. Chaudhari¹ has recently argued that all sections of the 'peasants' did not qualify for the state-owned crown land in the Punjab. The focus of the colonial state was restricted to only 'resourceful' peasants who were required to make considerable investment for the cultivation of virgin land. In such a situation the enterprising agricultural castes constituting the landholding peasantry were favoured. These were regarded 'as the backbone of Punjab Society'. The peasant grantees were largely *Jats*, *Arains*, *Kambohs*, *Sainis* and *Gurjars*. Among all the landowning castes, the *Jats* were the biggest beneficiaries. Other notable grantees included large and small landlords, and the members of urban bourgeoisie, such as the merchants, contractors, lawyers, doctors and retired public servants, belonging mostly to non-agricultural castes—the *Khatris*, the *Aroras*, the *Khojas*, and the *Banias*.

Thus, the colonial government wholly excluded the vast landless stratum of the rural population, especially the village menials (*Kamins*), service groups and artisans, in spite of the fact that the *chamars* (leather workers), the *Harijans* (low caste sweepers) and the members of artisan classes formed sixty per cent of the total agricultural labourers in the canal

* New Delhi.

1. B.B. Chaudhari, *Peasant History of the late Pre-Colonial and Colonial India*, Vol. III, Part 2, published under a series of Vols. with the general editorship of D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *History of Sciences, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civilization*, HSPCIC, New Delhi, 2008, p. 362.

colonies. Such a discriminatory attitude of the colonial government clearly shows that they used the existing caste-hierarchies in India to portray their rule as more benign than that of their predecessors. The involvement of such castes in agricultural work clearly indicates that the landless labourers, who are generally not considered as peasants in the theoretical framework of the system, were and probably still continue to be peasants in so far as their working relationship with the landlords is considered.²

Though the Arya Samaj Movement started by Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883) ultimately turned into a revivalist movement and also contributed to the assertion of an aggressive Hindu identity,³ Dayanand Saraswati's sharp criticism of many existing Hindu practices, such as idolatry, polytheism, and child marriage did not affect the existing social composition of caste in relation to peasant-landlord-cultivator relationships. As far as the comparative position between peasant grantees and labourers was concerned, not much change was noticeable in terms of the land-ownership pattern. The 'peasant colonizers', the largest single group of grantees of land in Punjab, were all drawn from the traditional 'agricultural castes'. The fact is that for the sake of homogeneity and social harmony grantees of the same caste were settled in the same village. Imran Ali's.⁴ analysis of the distribution of the land by castes shows a virtual monopoly over colony land of castes that ranked high in economic position and social status. He says :

"Landless workers, whether agricultural labourers, sub-tenants, or caste survivors... still fulfilled roles similar to the ones they had taken confined to their home villages.... These groups often moved their colony villages with the grantees from their home districts, thus continuing their old *sepidari* relationships."

In some areas the condition of labourers slightly improved. The Sikh-Maratha conflict, the period of 'Maratha anarchy', and the dreadful famine of 1783 resulted in a scarcity of labour in both south-east and south-west Punjab. In such situation labourers became settled peasants, which was useful for the proprietors. The position of some of them had become so

2. For a detailed analysis see, Irfan Habib, *Essays in Indian History : Towards Marxist Perception*, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 107-160, under the caption "The Peasant in Indian History."

3. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India (1885-1947)*, Delhi, 1983, p. 75.

4. *The Punjab under Imperialism*, Delhi, 1989, by Imran Ali, quoted in B.B. Chaudhari, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

strong that a distinction between the labour and the owners was obliterated. But the enterprising agriculturists such as the *Jats* and the *Arains* gradually replaced the non-cultivating 'proprietors' and land-controllers.

It has been held that due to high-caste taboos the position of the *Rajputs* as landlords or proprietors diminished. They were considered the worst cultivators in the Punjab. By contrast, the *Jats*, irrespective of whether they were Hindus, Sikhs or Muslims, had greater skills in farming which made them, the best cultivators in India. The *Rajputs* were mostly part-time agriculturists, representing the gentry of the province and thus constituted the aristocracy of the countryside. Proud of their birth and traditions, they did not relish the hard-work of an agriculturist. It has been argued that caste-status, a disdainful attitude to agriculture and sensitivity to *ijjat* (social respectability) forbade *Rajputs* to make help from women of the family for agricultural work.⁵ On the other hand, the *Jats* were influenced by the new social order of *Nanakpanthis* (the followers of the Sikh Guru Nanak). However, if we analyse the social composition of the *Jats*, the *Sainis* and the *Arains* in relation to the distribution of the land we find that the *Kamins* were not the beneficiaries of the changes brought about by the colonial government—be it canal-irrigated or non-irrigated areas of the Punjab—although they were considered indispensable associates of the zamindars in their agricultural operations.⁶ Among the lower castes, those at the lowest rung such as the *harijans*, the *chamars* and the *dhanaks* performed the largest and the most difficult kind of agricultural work, including collecting the refuse and scattering it over the fields. The other non-landholding castes such as the *lohars*, the *tarkhans*, the *telis*, the *nais*, the *kumhars* and the *jolahas* also helped in agricultural work at peak seasons such as sowing and harvesting.⁷

The caste-system continued and the lower caste people constituting one-eighth of the entire population suffered a lot. In spite of philanthropic organizations such as the Arya Samaj, the Christian missionaries, and the

5. B.B. Chaudhari, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

6. Himadri Banerjee, *Agrarian Society of the Punjab (1849-1901)*, Delhi, 1982, p. 175.

7. Mridula Mukherjee, *Colonizing Agriculture : The Myth of Punjab Exceptionalism*, New Delhi, 2005, p. 131. It is one of the best books on Punjab peasantry which deals with all aspects of the peasants, such as the peasants as tax-payers, peasants as debtors, peasants in the market, peasants as classes, etc. Based on district-wise statistical data on landholding. This study does not find 'proof of the existence of capitalist-agrarian relations or the growth of capitalism in agriculture' in the Punjab, p. 137.

Ahmadiyah charities, the literacy rate as a whole was as low as 7% and it was lowest among the lower castes, around 2%. Moreover, the landless cultivators far more numerous as compared to landlords. 22.5 per cent cultivators owned just 1.5 per cent of the cultivated areas, while 4.2 per cent cultivators possessed 18.5 per cent of the cultivated area. Less than one per cent (0.9 per cent) landlords had 7.9 per cent of cultivated areas. The poor peasants had to look after the needs of the government officials. The *baniyas* and the *sahukars* sucked their blood by charging interest on loans at exorbitant rates.⁸ The colonial government, on the other hand, gave concession only to the landlords. In this way the big landlords prospered at the cost of the poor peasants who were actually engaged in extending the cultivated areas for the production of commercial crops. This shows how the surplus generated by the poor peasants was usurped by the rich landlords.

Mridula Mukherjee informs us that in Punjab "the extent of differentiation and depeasantization was comparatively less than in many other regions because of tenurial structure, relatively late integration into the colonial system, etc. Also the depeasantization had not reached the extent it had in other regions because of the comparatively much greater extension of cultivation via canal irrigation.... Employment opportunities outside agriculture were comparatively much greater here (Punjab) than in many other regions because of internal migration and major recruitment base in the army." Therefore, she concludes, "there was relative stability of the small peasants in the Punjab." 0.1 million non-combatants in the army were from Punjab in the First World War. The non-combatants in the army were the *syces*, *bhistis*, *sweepers*, *craftsmen*, etc. who belonged to traditional non-land holding castes. But it may be noted that their number in the army was much less in proportion to their population. Moreover, the recruitment to the army was an economic necessity for the small yeoman farmer families. They were not in the strict sense of the word, mercenaries.⁹ By helping the British to suppress the Revolt of 1857, the Punjab chiefs and soldiers had saved the empire. It was felt by the colonial authority that "the best Indian material for the recruitment in the army had been ultimately discovered."¹⁰

8. S. Gajrani, *Peasants' Movement in Punjab*, Delhi, 1987, pp. 4-8.

9. Elliott, J.G., *A Roll of Honour : The Story of Indian Army (1939-45)*, quoted in Bhagwan Josh, *Communist Movement in Punjab*, Delhi, 1979, p. 17.

10. O.' Dwyer, M., *India : As I know It, 1885-1992*, quoted in Bhagwan Josh, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

Though differentiation among the *Kamin* castes was not prevalent throughout the Punjab province, there were broadly two groups according to the nature of their function. The labour of *Vadee Kamins* or *Kamin* was intimately connected with agriculture. The services of the *Khangī Kamins* or house menials were utilized by the zamindars. There were *Kamins* like *tarkhans* (carpenter), *lohars* (black smith), the *Chamars* (leather workers), the *harijans* (sweepers), the *dhobis* (washerman) and the *nais* (the barbers). They were highly skilled but they represented heterogeneous caste groups.

Although the zamindars appreciated the significant role of the *Kamins* in the village organization and accepted them as integral part of the village society, there were differences in the wage rates of the *Kamins*. The *lohars* received lower rates of wages than the *tarkhans*. Prior to colonial rule a small partition of whole produce was set apart for the *Kamins* but during the colonial period the custom disappeared when there was a demand for cash. *Kamins* now received only their allowances from the cultivating proprietors in lump sum at each harvesting season. The *Kumhars* were paid very little in non-irrigated regions. The same was the position of the *Chamars* who often organised caste *panchayats* as a token of protest against the highhandedness of the village proprietors. The tenants had to give to the *Kamins* not a share of the whole produce but a fixed amount of produce. Their economic condition deteriorated so much that they started migrating to other regions of the province. A large number of artisans were also indebted to the village *sahukars*. The Land Alienation Act (1901) was also a deterrent for them. The Act denied the status of agricultural tribes to the status of village artisans and menials and hence they were automatically debarred from acquiring land. This legal disability implied in the Act affected the *Ramgarhias* and the *Bagri Kumhars* of south-eastern Punjab districts. Exclusion from the land market came to them as a sharp blow.¹¹

There was a steady rise in the wages for agricultural labourers in some districts but in the districts of Peshawar, Amritsar, Ludhiana and Delhi there was steady decline in real wage rates towards the close of nineteenth century. It was found that many of the labourers continued to suffer from a daily insufficiency of food. They were deeply indebted to their employers and remained almost in a state of debt slavery. In the south-eastern districts their condition was equally miserable. They were frequently called upon to

11. Himadri Banerjee, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

render *begar* and they practically constituted the poorest section of the village social order. The situation was even more critical in Delhi. As early as 1879 it was found that their financial condition in the average years was so precarious that they were not commonly trusted by the village *sahukars*. In Rohtak their condition was equally miserable, while in Hoshiarpur even in average years they had very little surplus of their own and they were deeply involved in debt. Similarly in Peshawar many of them were tied to their creditors in debt slavery. Even more miserable was the fate of the *halis* of Hazara. The *halis* were generally agriculturists who owned land but they lost it to the creditors. They were no longer required to keep plough of their own and they ultimately became farm servants of the rich agriculturists. They were unable to repay loans to the creditors in their life time which was to be repaid by the heirs of deceased *halis*.

From a brief description of the conditions of the peasantry there emerges a picture of an immense complexity of the agrarian changes occurring in the Punjab in the second half of the nineteenth century. These changes were far from uniform in type and nature. It appears that the old agrarian structure was modified in some place to suit the interests of the colonial state. But we do not find fundamental structural changes particularly from the point of view of "the existence of capitalist relations in agriculture".¹² Neither was there an investment of capital nor an increase in productivity. The extension of cultivation did take place as a result of the canal colonies but the extension of cultivation was accompanied by an increase in the rural population. It may be noted that during the period from 1891 to 1931 the areas under cultivation expanded by 16 per cent, while the rural population increased by 23.2 per cent. Moreover, the size of the total available workforce in agriculture expanded much more than the extension of cultivation. This shows the 'myth' of capitalist farming in the Punjab during the colonial rule. Although colonialism integrated the Punjab into the international capitalist economy, this integration was based upon a distorted pattern of modernization. The requirements of British imperialism made Punjab a reservoir for military recruitment while at the same time intensifying the class differentiation and exploitation of the lower castes. This created conditions for the appropriation of the surplus of the region to serve the interests of the British empire.

12. Mridula Mukherjee, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

POLITICS OF COALITION GOVERNMENTS IN PUNJAB

*Gurpreet Singh Brar**

The politics of coalition governments in India began with the end of one party dominance era in late nineteen sixties. A coalition may be an alliance of persons, parties or countries. Coalition is defined as 'any combination of separate players (such as political parties) to win a voting game'.¹ The necessity for coalition usually arises when no single party is in a position to provide majority to form government or pass legislation in any legislative house. Coalitions are generally a characteristic of countries, like India, which have multi-party systems. Generally, the process of coalition formation lacks any ideological considerations; the only purpose is to provide majority of numbers to form that government. However, such coalitions are more stable which are formed by the ideologically closest parties.

The history of coalition politics in India can be traced from the pre-independence years. After the 1937 elections, a sort of coalition government was formed in Punjab. The interim government established in India on the basis of the Cabinet Mission (1946) recommendations was also a sort of coalition government as it included the representatives of various parties. After the advent of independence, coalition governments came into existence in a very limited way during 1952-89. In 1952, 1957 and 1962 elections, the Congress was in position to win majority and to form the governments at the centre and in almost all States. It was only in the fourth general elections 1967 that the Congress suffered a decline in popularity and coalition politics came to operate in some states. However, in 1989 and thereafter, the organization of coalition governments became a regular feature of Indian political system. At present coalition politics is in operation in full swing both at the centre and state level.

The politics of coalitions is one of the important features of party system in Punjab. The study of coalition governments, in particular, in the case of

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1. Iain McLean and Alistair McMillan (eds.), *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics*, First Indian Edition, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2004, p. 86.

Punjab, is actually the study of the Akali Dal-led coalition governments. The Congress has never formed a coalition government in Punjab so far, though it has occasionally entered into electoral alliances, mostly with the Communist parties. The history of coalition government in Punjab can be traced back to pre-independence days. Both the elected governments formed in Punjab before independence of the country (1937-1947) were coalition governments. In 1937 Punjab Assembly elections, though the Unionist Party had got an absolute majority (102 seats out of total 175) but in order to have a broad based government in the state it opted for the formation of a coalition ministry comprising Khalsa National Party (16 seats) and the National Progressive Party (15 seats). After this the Punjab Assembly elections were held in January 1946, no political party could get absolute majority.* In the situation of uncertainty, the Unionist Party, the Congress Party and Shiromani Akali Dal formed a coalition government under the leadership of Khizar Hayat Khan (leader of Unionist Party) which lasted upto March 1947 when it submitted its resignation due to deteriorating law and order situation in the state.²

Since the reorganization, the Punjab has witnessed Assembly elections ten times, beginning with the first in 1967 to the recent in 2007. Out of these, the Akali Dal has succeeded six times in forming the government, five times in collaboration with the non-Congress parties and once on its own. But, unfortunately, the Akali Dal-led government could work for the full term of five years only once [1997-2002]. Before 1992, the Akali Dal-led governments were either toppled by the defectors within the party, often on the instance of the Congress, or the President's rule was imposed on one pretext or other.

The first Assembly elections in reorganized Punjab were held in 1967. Despite struggling for the creation of Punjabi speaking state, the Akali Dal could win only 26 Assembly seats as it was divided in two factions, one led by Sant Fateh Singh which got 24 seats and the other by Master Tara Singh which could get only two seats. The Congress won 53 seats and emerged as the single largest party. The realization on the part of Akalis** of their inability

* Party position in Punjab Assembly Election 1946: Muslim League 74; Congress 51; Shiromani Akali Dal 23; Unionist Party 21; Anglo Indians 2; Independent Labour 2; Independent Christian 1; Independent Harijans 1. (For more detail see J.A. Khan, *op cit.*)

2. J.A. Khan, *Politics of Coalition Governments in Punjab*, Madan Publications, Patiala, 2006, p. 53.

** At that time, the Akalis were divided in Akali Dal [Sant] and the Akali Dal [Master]. However, the former was the mainstream party and, hence, here the Akali Dal refers to the Akali Dal [Sant].

to secure power on their own, even after the reorganization, compelled them to enter into first electoral alliance with the CPI, the CPI [M], SSP and the Republican Party under the banner of the United Front.* The Communist parties had supported the Akali demand for the linguistic state. The Jan Sangh [now known as the BJP and was a constituent of the Janta Party during mid-nineteen seventies], the rightist party, refused to align with the Akali Dal-led alliance saying that it could not unite with the former as the party had opposed the formation of Punjabi Suba.

In the changed political scenario, the Jan Sangh joined the Akali Dal-led coalition government of the United Front** as it did not want the Congress to come in power. The United Front had no common ideology nor did it form a concrete common programme of action. In fact, it was 'a cocktail of ideologies but having one thing in common, i.e., to resolve the Congress must not be permitted to form ministry in Punjab'.³ Thus the only basis of the post-poll alliance was the 'anti-Congressism'. The Akali Dal formed its first coalition ministry on March 8, 1967 under Gurnam Singh as the Chief Minister. However, it could work only for eight months and twenty four days. A major faction in the Akali Dal, led by Lachhman Singh Gill, had defected from the Chief Minister on the instance of the Congress. With the latter's help, he formed the ministry on November 25, 1967. Despite the fact that Gill could muster the support of 20 MLAs only, he was invited to form the government as the Congress had offered its support to the Gill ministry. The Gill ministry, however could not last long. 'On August 20, 1968, the Congress High Command instructed Congress legislators in Punjab to withdraw their support from the minority government of Lachhman Singh Gill'.⁴ In consequence, Gill had to resign the same day.

The President's rule was imposed in the state on August 24, 1968 and it continued till February 17, 1969. The February, 1969 mid-term Assembly

* Harkishan Singh Surjeet was the Convener for a strange coalition of Jan Sangh- CPI (M) -Akali Ministry of Gurnam Singh. This was stated by Chander Shekhar, once a prominent leader of CPI [M]'s employees wing, the CITU in Punjab and later on MCPI leader (*Times of India*, November 18, 2005).

** The United Front was a conglomeration of 53 MLAs including 24 of the Akali Dal [Sant], 9 of Jan Sangh, 5 of CPI, 3 of CPI [M], 3 of Republicans, 2 of Akali Dal [Master], one of the SSP and 6 independents. (For more detail see Lakhwinder Singh Sidhu, *Party Politics in Punjab*, Harnam Publications, New Delhi, 1994.)

3. J. C. Anand, "Punjab Politics of Retreating Communalism" in Iqbal Narain (ed.), *State Politics in India*, Meenakshi Publications, Meerut, 1976, p.276.

4. D. C. Pavate, *My Days as Governor*, Vikas Publications, Delhi, 1974, p.72.

elections in the state found the Akali Dal and the Jan Sangh in a closely knit alliance. The coalition experience, during Gurnam Singh-led government, had resulted into this new understanding and alignment between the two.⁵ Thus, began the era of almost a permanent alliance between them [with the only exception of 1985 election when the state was undergoing with communal pangs]. The bitterness between the two, which had been generated during the Punjabi Suba agitation, had long been gone to the winds. In particular, the electoral compulsions of both the parties facilitated their rapprochement. There was realization of the fact that 'in about 50 percent of the 73 Sikh-majority constituencies, the Hindu voters held the balance.'⁶ Hence, the Jan Sangh could play crucial role in favour of Akali candidates. Similar benefits were natural for the Jan Sangh, particularly in the mixed constituencies. Since then till day, both have played a complementary role.

In 1969 Assembly election, both the Akali Dal and the Jan Sangh came to realize the inevitability of alliance politics to capture power. The former underplayed its communal sensitivities and tried to project itself as a champion of the interests of Punjab reflecting a moderate and compromising attitude. The Dal did not emphasize on the issue of state autonomy. The Jan Sangh reciprocated the gesture by declaring that it would facilitate the use of Punjabi in the state at all levels. The CPI and the CPI [M] entered into a limited electoral alliance with the Akali Dal. The Akali Dal's alliance with the Jan Sangh and the adjustment of seats with the Communist parties prevented the splitting of non-Congress votes. Besides, the merger of both of the Akali Dal [Sant] and the Akali Dal [Master] before the eve of 1969 election also prevented the splitting of Akali votes.

The Akali-Jan Sangh coalition government was sworn in on February 17, 1969, with Gurnam Singh, again, as the Chief Minister. The combine had the strength of 51 in the total house of 104 seats. The CPI, CPI (M), Republican Samyakta Socialist Party (SSP), Parja Socialist Party (PSP) and Sawatantarata Party agreed to give support to the government from outside. The coalition, despite some differences between the partners, i.e., the Akali Dal and the Jan Sangh, worked well for some time. But, soon differences between the two arose over such issues like, the language policy, Chandigarh and other related controversies.⁷ At the same time, factional fighting within the Akali ranks

5. Amit Kansal, *A Study of Akali Alliances in Punjab Since 1967*, An Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Punjabi University Patiala, 2006, p. 106.

6. *The Statesman*, February 17, 1969.

7. *The Tribune*, July 3, 1969.

continued. The majority of the Akali MLAs got dissatisfied with the Chief Minister. With Jan Sangh's support, they finally outvoted Gurnam Singh Ministry on March 26, 1970 and elected in its place a new coalition government, headed by Parkash Singh Badal on March 27, 1970.

In a democracy, the governments are generally toppled by the opposition parties, but the irony was that the Akalis themselves toppled their government. However, the Badal-led Ministry too could not last long. The differences arose between the coalition partners. The Jana Sangh was not happy and satisfied with the representation given to it in the ministry. The manifest reasons of the Jana Sangh's break-up with the Badal government was the controversy over the extension of jurisdiction of newly established Guru Nanak Dev, University, the exclusion of Hindi by the Punjabi University from its medium of instruction and the lack of support for a new university at Jalandhar.⁸ It resulted in the withdrawal of the Jan Sangh support to the Badal's ministry. On June 30, 1970, the Jan Sangh pulled out of the government. Some Akali MLAs defected from the Sant Akali Dal and joined hands with Gurnam Singh in the hope that after the fall of Badal's ministry he will be the Chief Minister with the Congress's support. It was intensified by the Congress as it had planned to install Gurnam Singh as the Chief Minister. But the Governor accepted Badal's advice and dissolved the assembly, and President's rule was imposed on June 15, 1971. In the third Assembly elections, held on March 11, 1972, the Congress got 66 seats and formed a government in the state under the Chief Ministership of Giani Zail Singh.

The 'internal emergency' was declared by the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, on June 25, 1975. The Akali Dal launched an anti-emergency movement, namely, the 'Save Democracy Morcha' on July 9, 1975. The Akali Morcha continued till January, 1977, when the announcement for the elections was made by the Prime Minister. The emergency was lifted on March, 1977. The Janta Party emerged as a new political outfit in the wake of popular anti-emergency upsurge, particularly in entire north India in 1977. For major national parties, namely, the Bhartiya Lok Dal, the Bhartiya Jan Sangh, the Congress[O], and the Socialist Party, merged together to constitute the new organizations. The Punjab unit of the Janta Party was dominated by the erstwhile Jan Sangh and so the former 'also carried the Jan Sangh image'.⁹ The Janta Party was formed, rather in a hurry, so as to provide an alternative to the Congress by

8. *The Tribune*, March 27 and March 30, 1970.

9. Amit Kansal, *op cit.*, p. 117.

bringing in anti-Congress forces together. It entered into electoral adjustments with the Akali Dal in Punjab. Many factors contributed to the emergence of Akali-Janta alliance. Firstly, their shared view of the growth of alleged authoritarianism in the Congress and convergent mutual perception concerning an alternative was the key factor. As a matter of fact, the Congress had always been taking advantage of the division of the non-Congress votes among several parties in Punjab. The proclamation of internal emergency and large-scale detention of the members of non-Congress parties under MISA and DIR only strengthened the urge for rapprochement with one another against the Congress.

The newly emerged political scenario led to a marked change in the attitude of the Akali Dal since the time it decided to participate in the Jaya Parkash-led protest movement against the emergency regime. The party had realized that 'if it wanted to stand up as an alternative to the Congress party in the State, it was necessary for it to strengthen the anti-Congress forces at the national level'. There was a sea change in the attitude of both the Akali Dal and the erstwhile Jan Sangh elements. Parkash Singh Badal, the prominent Akali leader, had declared that 'the Akali Dal was an integral part of the Janta Party'.¹⁰ However, the Dal did not merge with the latter and preferred to maintain its distinct identity.

The fourth Punjab Assembly elections were held on June 12, 1977. The Akali Dal contested the elections in alliance with the Janta Party. Later on, the CPI [M] also joined the Akali-Janta alliance. As against the CPI, the former had opposed the emergency. The leftist CPI [M] and the rightist Jan Sangh buried their hatchet as 'the leadership of the CPI [M] and the former Jan Sangh had to suffer at the hands of the Congress during emergency; they forgot their old enmity and joined hands to keep the Congress out of the power in the State'.¹¹ The trio won 91 seats with 58, 25 and 8 seats respectively. The coalition ministry took its oath on June 23, 1977 with Parkash Singh Badal as the Chief Minister. This ministry was relatively stable as against the past ones. No doubt, the Akali Dal had some differences with the Janta Party in the State, particularly, over the issues of state autonomy and the Nirankaris. But the major differences, which it earlier had with the Jan Sangh, now the dominant constituent of the Janta Party, were solved with the passage of time. The result was that this coalition ministry lasted, at least, for three

10. *The Tribune*, February 28, 1978.

11. Ajit Singh, *Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab: A Study of the Dynamics of its Organization, Ideology, Strategy and Support Base Since Independence*, An Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1992, pp. 187-88.

years. Strangely enough, the then Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, expressed his dislike for the regional parties. He was reported to have stated that "We should not encourage regional parties. We should see that two or three national parties exist. Once that happens, regional parties will disappear".¹²

The Janta government could not last long mainly because of divisions within the party. It was divided into two factions, one led by Chaudhri Charan Singh and Raj Narain and the other by Morarji Desai. The latter's faction was virtually the former Jan Sangh. These developments also led to internal bickering between the Akali leaders. The Akali Dal's organizational leader, Jagdev Singh Talwandi, wanted to end the alliance with the RSS-dominated Janta Party in the state. On the contrary, the Chief Minister, Parkash Singh Badal, the leader of the ministerial wing, fought against terminating the alliance and wanted to maintain it, at least till the 1980 Lok Sabha elections. However, the 26-months' ruling alliance ended on September 3, 1979. On the other hand, the end of the Janta government at the Centre and the split in the Janta Party in 1979, led to the revival of the Jan Sangh in 1980 in the form of the Bhartiya Janta Party [BJP]. With the seventh Lok Sabha elections, held in January 1980, the Congress Party replaced the Janta Party at the Centre. In Punjab, the Congress got 12 out of 13 Lok Sabha seats and the Akali Dal only one. The Akalis were unable to forge alliance with any party in this election. Following the Janta Party's precedent, the Union government of the Congress dissolved the Assemblies in eight states,* alongwith Punjab, on February 17, 1980. This resulted in ending the Akali Dal-led coalition rule in Punjab.

The elections to Punjab Vidhan Sabha were held in May, 1980. This time, the Bhartiya Janta Party [the successor of erstwhile Jan Sangh], the earlier alliance partner of the Akalis, decided that 'it will go alone and will not make any poll alliance with any political party and will only have local adjustments in certain areas'.¹³ Moreover, there could not be alliance with the Akali Dal because in 1979-crisis at the national level, the Akalis had sided with the Janta Party group led by Charan Singh. They did not support the Jan Sangh group [now the BJP] as a partner.

The 1980 Parliamentary and Assembly election experience amply demonstrated that both the BJP and the Akali Dal suffered huge loss by not contesting election in alliance with each other. In order to successfully compete

12. *The Tribune*, April 20, 1977.

* These included the Punjab, U.P., Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Orissa.

13. *The Statesman*, April 24, 1980.

with the Congress, the Sikh-based Dal required the Hindu support though the BJP and the latter, exclusively based on the Hindus, required the Sikh support through the former. The alliance with the Communist parties, did not meet this requirement, their support base having been very limited in Punjab.

On the eve of 1985 Assembly elections, the political situation had been drastically changed. To begin with, the rise of Sikh militancy in Punjab forced the Communist parties to distance away from the Akali Dal. The BJP had already distanced itself from the Akalis. The Congress also had been accusing the Akali leadership for creating a mess in the state. The CPI and the CPI [M] formed a United Front against the Akali Dal and the Congress in 1985 election.¹⁴ Almost all political parties were on their own this time. The Akali Dal entered only into seat adjustment with the minor wing of the Janta Party.

For the first time in Akali history, the Akali Dal won a landslide victory with 73 seats in 1985 Assembly election. The Congress emerged as the main opposition party by winning 32 seats. The BJP got only 6 seats, while the CPI won a single seat and the CPI [M] could not even open its account. Hence, more than five years after the dismissal of the coalition government, in which the Akali Dal was the senior partner with the Janta Party, the Akalis were back in power at their own with Surjit Singh Barnala as their leader in 1985.

The State underwent the President's rule since the dismissal of Barnala Ministry on May 11, 1987. After a prolonged period of five years of the President's rule in the State, unprecedented in the history of the country, the elections to the state Assembly were announced to be held in Punjab in June, 1991 by Chandra Shekhar government, which enjoyed the Congress support from outside. The Congress decided to boycott the elections.¹⁵ Despite the deployment of para-military forces in the state, a number of candidates were killed during the election campaign period. But till the day the P.V. Narasimha Rao's government was to be installed at the centre, the Chief Election Commissioner, T.N. Seshan, kept on saying that the elections would be held in any case in Punjab on scheduled date of June 22, 1991. But hours before the oath-taking ceremony by Narasimha Rao, Seshan made a turnabout over the Punjab Governor and postponed the election till September 1991. The cancelation of elections at the eleventh hour met with wide criticism. It was said to be done, simply because 'the non-Congress victory' and that too possibly

14. Prithipal Singh, *Pattern of Communist Politics in Punjab: A Comparative Study of the CPI and the CPI [M] [1965-85]*, An Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1991, p. 83.

15. Amit Kansal, *op.cit.*, p. 141.

of pro-Khalistan faction of the Akali Dal, 'was otherwise certain'.¹⁶ Consequently, the President's rule was extended till February 1992 election.

The elections to the Punjab Vidhan Sabha were held, under the shadow of guns, on February 19, 1992. All of the major factions of the Akali Dal, except the one known as Akali Dal [Kabul], had decided to boycott the elections. As a consequence of the boycott call, the election results indicated a very low voters' turnout. The Congress won 87 seats and formed its ministry under the leadership of Beant Singh. Evidently, the 'huge' victory of the Congress in these elections was mainly due to the absence of its main rival, the Akali Dal, from the election fray. The poor turnout in these elections indicated that it was not an election but rejection as a large majority of the electorate did not participate and it was rightly characterized as a 'deviant election'.¹⁷

In the meanwhile, the eleventh general elections to Lok Sabha were declared to be held in April/May 1996. The Akali Dal [Badal] explored the possibility of electoral alliance with all political parties to defeat the Congress. Political alliances had undergone a change in response to the changed moods of the people. Although Akali-Jan Sangh coalition had formed four governments in Punjab, but this time the Akali Dal had not entered into any alliance with its traditional partner BJP. During the last decade the urban Hindu voters had moved away from the Akalis. The Akali Dal had its support base mainly in the rural areas. The Akalis were aware of the fact that they could not come to power on the basis of Sikh voters alone and that too in the rural areas. So the Akalis found it appropriate to forge an alliance with the BSP, which had pockets of influence in the Doaba and border areas. The SCs accounted for 28.31 per cent of Punjab's population. The BSP had also emerged as the major opposition party in the Assembly during 1992 elections. It succeeded in forging an alliance with the BSP. The consortium was 'ideologically divergent, yet electorally convergent alliance'.¹⁸ It was held as an alliance of 'the landlords' and 'the landless' proving thus that 'the politics in Punjab has rarely had an ideological component to alliances'.¹⁹ The alliance fared very well as it resulted in reducing the Congress tally of Lok Sabha seats from twelve in 1992 to merely two seats in 1996. The Akali Dal [Badal] had won eight out of thirteen seats in Punjab.

16. Nirmal Mukerji, "Punjab Problem or Opportunity", *Mainstream*, October, 1992, p. 49.

17. P.S. Verma, "Zila Parishad and Panchayat Samiti Elections in Punjab: Revival of Political activities", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 30, No. 22, 1995, p. 1325.

18. Amit Kansal, *op.cit.*, p. 150.

19. *The Economic Times*, November 14, 2004.

However the possibilities of Akali-BJP alliance against the Congress in the ensuing state Assembly election had got strengthened only after the Parliamentary election. The Akali Dal [Badal]'s success was appreciated as the vindication of its slogan of "Panth, Punjab, and Punjabi".²⁰ In the aftermath of the Congress's rout in 1996 Lok Sabha elections, the Akali Dal was consolidating its position as a predominant party in the state. Keeping in mind the necessity of having supplementary support of the Hindus, it turned back to the BJP, its old alliance partner, in 1997 Punjab Assembly election. On its part, 'the BJP viewed this arrangement as the first of many regional pacts that would lead it to the national power'.²¹ The BJP had emerged as the single largest party in the 11th Lok Sabha elections held in May, 1996. As the speculation intensified about the possibility of the BJP forming its first ever government, 'the Akali Dal [Badal] made a public declaration of support for the BJP's claim'.²²

Out of sheer political expediency, the Akali Dal and the BJP again joined hands in 1997 Assembly election. As usual, the most obvious basis of 'the alliance between the BJP and the Akali Dal was the anti-Congressism'.²³ It suits to both as the Akalis get Hindu support and their base in the Sikh peasantry nicely complements the BJP's support in urban-Hindu dominated constituencies. In fact, the 1997 election brought about promising electoral party alignments. For the first time in the political history of Punjab, the alliance of the Akali Dal with the BJP was struck before the elections. The motivation of two partners however differed: the Akali Dal's principal objective was to take power in Punjab but for the BJP, this strategy was not limited to the short-term benefit of a regional victory. In the long run, the party was counting on the Sikh vote in other state elections, whereas in Delhi, as stated somewhere else too, they could make the balance tilt in its favour. The Akali Dal-BJP alliance triumphed with a landslide victory by capturing 93 of 117 Assembly seats and nearly 48 per cent of the votes polled. The Akalis particularly did well in rural (70) and semi-rural (24) constituencies. The Akali Dal's share of the popular votes was slightly less than the record 38 per cent it achieved 1985 Assembly election.

Over the years, on the whole, the Akali Dal has stood with the BJP through thick and thin. The BJP has also reciprocated with the same spirit.

20. *The Tribune*, February 16, 1993.

21. *The Tribune*, February 23, 1997.

22. Amit Kansal, *op.cit.*, p. 152.

23. For more detail see, Kuldeep Nayar, 'Badal Shows the way' *The Indian Express*, June 13, 1994.

For instance, it supported the Akali Dal's candidate, Surjit Singh Barnala, in the elections to the vice-presidency of India in 1998. The Akalis, in alliance with the BJP, not only ruled the state as a senior partner but also shared the power, right from the Janta Party's days, in the central government as well. In 1998, the Akali Dal became a participant in the twelve-party Vajpayee-led coalition government at the centre. The longstanding anti-Congress tradition of the Akali Dal and the complementary electoral bases of the two parties have been the major factors behind the sustenance of the alliance.

The Akali-BJP alliance first time successfully completed its five year term in the state from 1997 to 2002. All the previous Akali-led coalition ministries in Punjab had remained almost unstable. The major cause of the instability of such ministries had been the struggle for power within the Akali Dal. The aspirants of the Chief Ministership always looked for a chance to topple the government and capture power by every hook and crook. The second major cause has had been the Congress. Having sufficient strength in the house, the Congress always encouraged one or the other Akali faction to defect from the ruling one. Moreover, the differences between the coalition partners have also led to the fall of Akali coalition governments in Punjab in the past.

Since 1967, the people of Punjab have never voted for a party to rule the state for the second consecutive term. The 2002 elections were not an exception. Although the Akali-BJP coalition experiment helped in moderating the fundamentalist edges and the alliance partners enjoyed the first time full tenure; the sky-high expectations of the people from the Akali-BJP combine and the rampant state corruption became the root cause of their defeat in February 2002 Punjab Assembly election.

The tenth election to Punjab Vidhan Sabha was held on February 15, 2007. The Akali Dal again contested the election in alliance with the BJP. On the other hand, the Congress, under the combined leadership of Chief Minister, Capt. Amarinder Singh and the state party president, Shamsher Singh Dullu, preferred to go alone. The Punjab electorate favoured a change, giving the Akali-BJP alliance yet another chance to govern the state. The difference between the seats won by the Akalis (49) and the Congress (44) was only five, and it was the Akali Dal's pact with the BJP that helped it to have a comfortable governing majority. Parkash Singh Badal became a record fourth time Chief Minister of Punjab. The state BJP's demand for Deputy Chief Ministership was rejected by Badal. The Central leadership of the Hindu party did not emphasize on the issue.

As such, the Akali Dal was first to adopt the alliance politics in the state to stand up as an alternative to the Congress Party in 1967. Since then BJP has been the principal and almost permanent alliance partner of the Akali Dal, BJP with the support base in Hindu population is the only party that does not share support structure with the Akali Dal, the party of the Sikhs. This non-competitive nature of the support structure helps the two parties to draw close to each other and enter into alliance arrangement and it is the major reason that why the BJP is being an almost permanent alliance partner of the Akali Dal, while the Communist Parties, some times support either the Akali Dal or the Congress, or fight elections independently. On occasions, the Akali Dal has also entered into electoral alliance with the BSP. The keynote of the alliance politics of the Akali Dal has been anti-Congressism. But, on the other hand the Congress advocates forming an alliance on a secular basis against the Akali Dal-BJP alliance, terming the latter as 'communal'. The recent upsurge of the regional parties with the decline of the Congress party after the fourth general election has compelled the Congress to forge alliances.

The enduring nature of Punjab politics has stayed over the times. Its endurance has been in the alliances as well as confrontations between regional and centralist forces. This process has been blunting a trend towards centralization of power in the hands of a single party. It has been this endurance that has acted as deterrent to terrorism. It has been this endurance that has prevented communal forces from holding away in Punjab politics and society. It has been this endurance that has kept the separatist forces at bay.

In crux, it can be said that the coalition politics in Punjab encouraged the Hindu-Sikh harmony and succeeded to fill the gap between the two major communities and helped the Akali Dal and the BJP to broaden its support base among masses in the state. Politically, a bi-polar alliance system has developed at national level, i.e. the Congress and its allies vs. BJP and its allies. Alliances politics has smoothened the centre-state relations. In Punjab, the Akali Dal-BJP alliance in 1997-2002 facilitated political stability as it enabled the Akali Dal- led ministry to complete its full term despite the split in the Akali Dal.

The Congress party has its own strong base in Punjab. It does not feel the necessity to ally itself with other parties. It enters into an alliance with the CPI only to use the latter for making inroads into the Akali Dal's support base, but not with the intention of forming a coalition ministry. As for the BJP, this kind of arrangement acted as a precursor of similar regional pacts that helped it to secure national power in the 1990s.²⁴ The alliance is also helped by the

24. Ashutosh Kumar, "Electoral Politics in Punjab: A Study of the Akali Dal", *EPW*, April 3, 2004, p. 5110.

fact that the three regions in Punjab, i.e., Majha, Doaba and Malwa, are primarily geographical divisions that has nothing to do with the social dominance of any community. It has been more so after the 1971 delimitation when the Sikh dominated rural settlements were merged with the Hindu dominated urban ones. Significantly, the alliance between the two parties with diametrically opposed ideology and opposite social bases has forced them to gradually discard radical stances on contentious issues like, language or centre-state relations.²⁵ The dominant theme in their common minimum programme harped on 'peace, brotherhood, communal harmony, socio-economic welfare, all round development and sustainable and profitable agriculture through diversification.' The winning Assembly electoral alliance was succeeded by the Parliamentary alliance and the Akali Dal and its alliance partners were also able to form coalition government - The Akali- Janta Party coalition 1977-80, the Akali-BJP coalition of 1997-2002 are such examples.

25. For more detail, see Ashutosh Kumar, "Punjab: In Search of New Leadership", *EPW*, December 18, 2004.

NEW AGRICULTURAL TECHNIQUES IN THE PUNJAB UNDER THE BRITISHERS (1849-1923)

*Charanjit Kaur**

The agricultural technology means the mechanical arts and practical skills of cultivation used in preparing the soil, sowing, raising and managing the crops, keeping the livestock and marketing of agricultural produce.

Agriculture was the main occupation of the overwhelming majority of population as well as the mainstay of the government income in the Punjab under British rule. The economic transformation of the province therefore depended on the dissection and form of agricultural change. At the outset of British rule in Punjab, the agricultural implements in use, the quality of seeds, animal husbandry, the system of crop rotation, marketing of agricultural produce and the like were almost in a stagnant condition. The establishment of British rule in Punjab, opened the way for the introduction of western science and technology in the province.

Various technological changes such as the use of high yielding varieties of seeds, more efficient equipment and machines, improved irrigational system, better livestock, new techniques of cultivation such as better system of rotation of crops, use of more manure, control of crop diseases and better system of marketing of agricultural produce came in the Punjab. Changes in means of production brought changes in the social and economic set up in the province.

M.L. Darling talks briefly about the new implements and seeds introduced by the British government and growth of commercial and marketing spirit.¹

After the annexation of Punjab Britishers paid special attention towards the process of introducing the technological innovations in the agriculture of the Punjab.

In 1851, Punjab Agri-Horticultural Society, having majority of Europeans as its members was established in Punjab under the Presidentship of Henry Lawrence. Throughout the twenty year period, 1851-71, the society attempted to improve the agriculture, floriculture and horticulture of Punjab. Although it

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1. M.L. Darling, *Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, Delhi, 1977, pp.151-153.

failed to achieve its objectives, yet it provided guidelines for the development of agriculture in the province on modern lines.²

In the year 1905, Department of Agriculture was organised under a Director of Agriculture. The headquarter of the department had been located initially at Lyallpur.³ The department was separated from that of Land Record with effect from 1 July 1906. The policy of the Agricultural Department had been to explain and demonstrate the results of investigations carried out on its experimental farms at Lyallpur, Sergodha, Montgomery, Jullunder etc.. The Punjab Agricultural College was established at Lyallpur in 1909. It was divided into two parts, i.e., two years for the first examination and two years for the B.Sc. in Agriculture. A new agricultural centre was opened at Gurdaspur in 1909⁴ and at Jullunder in 1912 to 1913 to show and explain the methods of dry farming to the farmers.

The better techniques of cultivation included better rotation of crops, use of manure and control of crop diseases. Experiments with various rotations were carried out in agricultural farm at Lyallpur. The farmers were advised not to follow the crops of the same type of root system. The cultivation of crops which collected nitrogen with their roots were included in the rotation. Green manuring was encouraged. Moreover, with the development of irrigation separate rotations of crops were developed for the different categories of land.

The work of popularising the improved implements was supplemented by the village Farmers Associations, which were organised in 1911-12.⁵ The cultivators formed the associations and agreed to follow the advice and recommendations of the agriculture department in all matters connected with the agricultural improvements. They kept the department in touch with the local needs. In 1920-21 these associations were reported to be working practically in every district.⁶ Moreover, farmers-weeks were observed in the governmental farms in most circles. The cultivators were brought from all over the circle to these centres, so that they might see the latest development and discoveries in agricultural practices.

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2. I.J. Kerr, 'The Agri-Horticultural Society of the Punjab, 1851-1871', *The Panjab Past and Present*, Patiala, 1976, pp.252-56.
 3. *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and Its Dependencies for the Year 1905 to 1906*, para 20.
 4. *Annual Report of the Department of Agricultural Punjab for the year 1906*, p.1.
 5. *Annual Reports on the Administration of the Punjab for the year 1911- 12*, p.5.
 6. *Annual Reports on the Administration of the Punjab for the year 1920-21*, p.65.

To control the crop diseases, three methods were employed. In the first place, the varieties which were resistant to diseases were popularised. Secondly, the peasants were educated to adopt improved methods of cultivation such as careful preparation of soil, watering and manuring at proper time and appropriate scheme of rotation. Lastly, the disease spreading bacteria and pests which destroyed the crops were examined by the chemical and biological methods.⁷

The Agricultural Department had various experimental farms on which the research work in connection with the testing of relative merits of different types of crops, seed selection, evolution and testing of new experiments, research in connection with rotations of crops, work on the efficiency of manure, etc., were carried out. In 1920 agricultural department had 7 experimental farms, 15 district farms to work out the local problems and 9 seed farms for the multiplication of pure seeds.⁸ As a result of the work done on the various experimental farms many new varieties of crops suitable to the climate and soil of the Punjab were introduced. These were wheat, cotton, sugarcane, gram, barley, rice, dates, potatoes, flax, tea, new orleans, cotton, indigo, tobacco, English fruit and vegetables.⁹ The most important of these was wheat. Wheat was the staple crop grown for sale. The development of canals had led to a great expansion of the area under spring crops, especially wheat, which ordinarily covered about 10,000 square miles. In good year such as 1894, 1895 and 1901 it covered more than 10,900 square miles¹⁰ but in famine years of 1897 and 1900 only about 7,800 square miles. There were many indigenous varieties, both red and white, bearded and beardless.¹¹ Improved varieties of wheat went ahead of others. Among them Punjab 11 wheat, Punjab 8A wheat and Wheat No. 265, Pusa 12, were most prominent. The experiments in wheat showed that Punjab 11 wheat was best suited to the canal colonies while Pusa 12 was well-adopted to the unirrigated parts of the province.¹² The area under the cultivation of Punjab 11 wheat in Lower Chenab,

7. William, Roberts and Kartar Singh, *A Text Book of Punjab Agriculture*, Lahore, n.d., pp.56-58.

8. In 1946, the college at Lyallpur had 679 students and the department had 12 experimental farms, 13 district farms and 14 more for seed. M.L. Darling, *op. cit.*, p.149; Agricultural department had large number of establishments in all the districts; for instance, it had three establishments—an agricultural station at Montgomery and two seed farms at Shergarh and Patna. *Montgomery District Gazetteer, 1933*, p.163.

9. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Provincial Series, Punjab, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1908, p.62.

10. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Provincial Series, Punjab, Vol. I, p.59.

11. *Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1911-12*, para 373.

12. *Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1914-15*, para 174.

Lower Bari Doab and Lower Jhelum colonies was 302,500 acres.¹³ Pusa 12 wheat continued to be the most popular wheat in the Sialkot, Hoshiarpur and Jullundur districts. The area under it in 1917 was 10,000 acres. It gave an increase out-turn of at least 25 percent and a premium of 2 annas per maund. It was also very popular for eating purposes.¹⁴ In 1891, about 550,000 tons of wheat was exported from the province. In 1901-02 this figure rose to 623,000 tons. During the ten years ending with 1912 the net export of Punjab wheat to Karachi averaged 899,080 tons which rose to 2,172,094 tons during ten years ending with, 1921.¹⁵

Among the vegetables, the improved varieties of potatoes were tested in the hills and plains. Scotch varieties have higher yield. Five scotch varieties – Factor, Admiral, King, Edward, Talisman and Scot were the most important. Other varieties of vegetables such as cauliflower, peas, radish, tomatoes, carrots, onions, chillies etc., were introduced.¹⁶

Besides new cotton varieties several improved *desi* varieties were also evolved by the Department of Agriculture. In the South-East Punjab, where *desi* cotton was mostly grown, a useful white flowered variety known as Hansi cotton was evolved.¹⁷ The area under it was 22,440 acres in 1922.¹⁸ The area of Lyallpur district which was the most backward and desolate region of the Punjab in 1891 became the model of Punjab agriculture in 1901. More brilliant success was achieved in the discovery of better varieties of cotton than those ordinarily used. The high yielding varieties gave more income than the *desi* cotton from the same area. A variety of American origin, technically called 4F and popularly known as ‘American’ had been discovered by Mr. D. Milne and was introduced in Punjab in 1914-15 and the area sown was only five acres.¹⁹ The area under it in the year 1919-20 was 511,000 acres.²⁰

13. *Annual Reports on the Operation of the Department of Agriculture Punjab for the year 1918-19*, p.10.

14. *Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1916-17*, para 183.

15. *Annual Reports on the Season and Crops of the Punjab, 1913-14*, p.4; and 1921, p.4.

16. William Roberts and Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, pp.358-365.

17. Where an adequate water supply was not available it was still more profitable to grow *desi* cotton than American and the department continued to supply selected *desi* seeds to those who required them. *Annual Reports on the Administration of the Punjab for the year 1922-23*, p.83.

18. *Annual Report on the Operations of the Agricultural Department Punjab from 1924*, Vol. I, p.13.

19. *Report on the Census of India, 1931*, Vol. XVIII, Punjab, Part 1, p.24.

20. *Annual Report on the Operation of the Department of Agriculture, Punjab for 1919*, p.10; *Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab, 1919-20*, para 262.

The department of agriculture carried on experiments and research on agriculture farms in laboratories with a view to securing the adoption by the Punjab peasants of the new methods of farming and improved implements. The increasing manufacture of the iron implements and its uses led to the mechanization of agriculture in the Punjab. The more important among the iron implements were ploguhs, horse and hand hoes, harrows, drills, reapers, threshers, winnowers, fodder cutters, cane crushers and Persian wheels.²¹

Some efforts to introduce the new implements in the province were made in the late 19th century. With the inception of the department of agriculture in 1906 more attention was paid to the introduction of new implements. Firstly, the modern implements and machinery as found in the world market was modified to suit local conditions. Secondly, the indigenous implements were improved.²²

The agricultural implements used by the farmers were cheap, light and portable, easy to make and to repair, and within the capacity of drought cattle; there was, however, great scope for improvement. The department instituted agricultural machinery depots which stocked modern implements and spare parts recommended by the department.²³

The new iron sugarcane crushers, supplied by Messers Thomas and Nylne Behila Company, fastly superseded the native press called *Velna*.²⁴ The new crusher was more sophisticated and required one pair of bullocks to work instead three pairs. It shortened, cheapened and facilitated the work of pressing sugarcane 13 times more in quantity and its yield was 20 percent higher than the old press.²⁵ Introduced in the last quarter of the 19th century it had ousted the old wooden press everywhere. There were other improved locally made crushers such as Nahn Sultan Mills and Batala Mills.²⁶ Various

21. William, Roberts and Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

22. *Annual Report on the Season and Crops of the Punjab for the year 1927*, Vol. I, p.191.

23. Efforts were made to get help from the private sectors to take up the stocking and sale of the implements and spare parts. The agriculture department's depots ceased to function locally as soon as the private firms had established themselves and the Zamindars had facilities to get from them what was required at reasonable prices; *Annual Report on the Operations of the Agricultural Department, Punjab Evidence*, 1923, Vol. I, p.19.

24. *District Gazetteer Amritsar 1892-93*, p.94; *District Gazetteer Karnal 1883-84*, p.162; *Annual Report on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1893-94*, p.109.

25. Himadri Banerjee, *Agrarian Society of the Punjab 1849-1901*, New Delhi, 1978, pp.91-93.

26. *Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1880-81*, p.145; 1882-83, p.151; 1893-94, p.109; *District Gazetteer Karnal 1883-84*, p.163.

power driven mills were also introduced of which Chattanooga No. 192 and Messey were satisfactory. Both of them required the driving power from 10-15 HP and crushed 25 to 30 maunds of cane per hour.

The Department of Agriculture conducted many trials with the motor tractors in the Punjab. In 1920 two motor tractors were purchased – An Auston and a Cletrac.²⁷ But were not successful owing to frequent breakdown.

Various types of drills were introduced for sowing the seed in two or more lines at a time. The imported automatic drills were tried for sowing wheat and cotton. All these were far complicated and more expensive.²⁸ For this reason the Agricultural Department evolved a number of simple drills such as Kharif and Rabi drills.²⁹ In 1923, an automatic Rabi drill was evolved at Lyallpur, it found favour with the Zamindars because of the excellence of its work.³⁰ There were two types of reaping machines introduced in the province: manual delivery and self-delivery. The first bullock power reaper cutting standing wheat, barley and oats was obtained at Lyallpur farm in 1906. But it never became popular with the farmers.³¹ During 1907, seven reaping machines were employed in the two canal colonies for the demonstration and about 20 machines were imported in the province.³²

In 1909, about 42 reapers were used in the province. This number rose to 150 in 1915.³³ With the reaper some Zamindars cut as much as 8 to 10 acres in a day. The cost of reaping an acre of wheat was about Rs. 1-8-0, whereas the cost was Rs. 7-8.³⁴ Thus the utility of the reapers was appreciated.

27. *Annual Report on the Operations of the Agricultural Department Punjab for the year 1921*, Vol. I, p.21.

28. William Roberts and Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p.90.

29. *Ibid.*, pp.90-91.

30. *Annual Report on the Operations of the Agricultural Department Punjab for the year 1923*, Vol. I, Appendix VI, p.VIII.

31. William Roberts and Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p.95; *Annual Report on the Operation of the Agricultural Department Punjab for the year 1907*, Vol. I, p.ii; and *Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1906-07*, p.24.

32. *Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1906-07*, p.24; *Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1909-10*, p.20; *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and Its Dependencies for the Year 1910*, Vol. I, Appendix III, p.VI; and *Report on the Administration of the Punjab and Its Dependencies for the Year 1915*, Vol. I, p.9.

33. *Annual Report on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1913*, Vol. I, Appendix I, p.1.

34. *Annual Report on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1914*, Vol. I, p.8.

The improved Persian wheel was designed. The Agri-horticultural Society had its working model in operation at Lahore by December 1851. The wheel worked well and increased the water flow.³⁵ It required less human and cattle labour. The Agriculture Department evolved several types of improved Persian wheels.³⁶ A cheap form of metal roller bearing was introduced. The Persian wheels were generally worked by animals. The new iron Persian wheel was much appreciated by the farmers.³⁷

The new iron ploughs which were recommended to the farmers were to turn the furrow, thus bringing the lower layers of the soil up and taking the top portion down, which was not possible in the case of *desi* ploughs.³⁸ There were two types of ploughs – one having a short beam and the other a long beam. The former had a short beam and a land wheel. Important ploughs of this types were Raja, Punjab and Chhatanoga. But due to their high price, complicated method of regulatory and difficulty in their repairs, they never became popular in the province.³⁹ The second type of ploughs had a long beam and no wheel. Bullocks were yoked to them as in the case of *munah*. They were easily controlled by the ploughman and became popular in the Punjab. They could be further divided into two classes – heavy and light. The light plough was suitable for light lands and small bullocks and was known as Meston plough. They were popular because they were cheap.⁴⁰ By 1909 over 200 light furrow turning ploughs were sold in the province.⁴¹

The hoes and harrows of various sorts were implemented with several teeth fixed below some kind of frame intended for stirring the soil after first ploughing, breaking the surface after rain, covering small seed after sowing and inter-culturing the crops.⁴² Various kinds of horses, bullocks and hand hoes were recommended to the cultivators. Among the imported hoes, the international planet junior horse hoe, an American machinery resulted in a

35. I.J. Kerr, *op. cit.*, p.252.

36. *District Gazetteer Karnal 1918*, pp.107-109.

37. *Annual Report on the Operations of the Agricultural Department Punjab for the year 1923*, Vol. 1, p.xxiv.

38. Patric, *Possibilities of Agricultural Development in the Punjab*, Government Printing, Lahore, 1923, pp.12-13.

39. *Annual Report on the Season and Crops of Punjab for the year 1927*, Vol. 1, p.191.

40. William Roberts and Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, pp.80-81.

41. *Annual Reports on the Administration of the Punjab for the year 1909-10*, p.20; *Annual Report on the Operations of the Agricultural Department, Punjab from 1910*, Vol. 1, Appendix III, p.VI.

42. H.K. Trevaskis, *Punjab of Today*, Vol. 1, Lahore, 1931, p.321.

good economy in making ridges for cultivation of vegetables, sugarcane and cotton. Seventeen hoes of this type were ordered by the department, for private persons in 1908.⁴³ The sale of different makes of imported horse and hand hoes numbered 50 in 1922-23 which rose to 310. But as they were costly, a cheap bullock hoe was introduced.⁴⁴

Similarly Lyallpur hoe was introduced in 1916. The Lyallpur and Gujrat hoes became popular among the agriculturists. Among the harrows, the spring lined harrow proved very useful, as it enabled the farmers to make better use of rainfall or irrigation water.⁴⁵ A simple and cheap bar harrow designed by Department of Agriculture was evolved in 1914.⁴⁶

Many new implements were imported from abroad, and modified in accordance with the suggestions from the agricultural department.⁴⁷ In 1914 the department started manufacturing simple improved country made implements at Lyallpur Agricultural farm. Afterwards this work was also started at the other experimental farms of the department. In 1915, when the agricultural engineer was appointed, further work on the adoption of modern implements was taken in hand. Some useful work was done by the department of agriculture by introducing several types of improved implements like furrow-turning, fodder cutters, harrows, hoes, small pumping machinery and water-lifts.⁴⁸ These implements were found suitable for local conditions and were brought on the approved list of the agricultural department.⁴⁹

Efforts were made on a wider scale to develop veterinary science to improve the live-stock of the province for the betterment of agriculture.⁵⁰ The Punjab Veterinary College at Lahore was established in 1882. It turned

43. *Annual Report on the Operations of the Agricultural Department Punjab for the year 1908*, p.9.

44. About 46 Lyallpur hoes were disposed off in 1917 and in 1918-19 the number rose to 96. *Annual Report on the Operations of the Agricultural Department Punjab for the year 1917*, Vol. 1, p.xviii; *Annual Report on the Operations of the Agricultural Department Punjab for the year 1913*, Vol. 1, p.9.

45. H.K. Trevaskis, *op. cit.*, p.325.

46. Bar Harrow was a light harrow with 17 iron points attached to a triangle wooden on iron frame. William Roberts and Kartar Singh, *op. cit.*, p.84.

47. Gurcharan Singh Dhaliwal, *Agricultural Implements Industry of the Punjab*, The Board of Economic Inquiry Punjab, Ludhiana, 1953, p. 1.

48. B.S. Saini, *The Social and Economic History of Punjab, 1901-1939*, Delhi, 1975, pp. 181-82.

49. Gurcharan Singh Dhaliwal, *op. cit.*, p.2.

50. *Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1922-23*, p.90.

out annually a large number of trained veterinary assistants.⁵¹ More success, however, was achieved with the establishment of veterinary department to deal with the cattle diseases. The department was provincial in 1901 and was placed under the charge of the Director of Agriculture. There were 12 veterinary hospitals at work in 1905-06 and the number of animals treated by them was 26,500.⁵²

Great attention was paid towards the cattle breeding. Improved varieties of bulls were imported from the Governmental Cattle Farm, Hissar. Upto 1853 for various districts thirty bulls were imported.⁵³ There were 214 stud bulls in the province in 1906. As other supply was not sufficient and to meet the increasing demand, a scheme for a bull farm at Sargodha was sanctioned.⁵⁴ In 1901-11 there were 485 stud bulls at work in the province.⁵⁵ A scheme for the improvement of Dhani Cattle Breeding in 1919-20 and Hariana Cattle Breeding in 1922-23 was laid down. The district boards of Attock, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Shahpur and Mianwali in Dhani tract and the district boards of Hissar, Rohtak and Gurgaon in Hariana tract participated in this scheme.⁵⁶

In 1923 the government granted a further area of about 5000 acres of land near Shergarh in Montgomery district for cow breeding conditions.

In the sphere of implements the most important change was from the use of wooden to iron implements as far as possible. The new environment helped to reduce the drudgery of certain operations performed by human and cattle labour.

51. *Reports on the Census of India 1921*, Vol. XV, Part I, pp.14-24; *Annual Report on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1919-20*, p.71.

52. *Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1905-06*, p.27.

53. *Annual Reports on the Administration of Punjab for the year 1851-52 and 1852-53*, p.188; *District Gazetteer Hissar, 1883-84*, p.49.

54. *Annual Reports on the Administration of the Punjab for the year 1904-05*, p.24; *1905-06*, p.27.

55. *Annual Reports on the Administration of the Punjab for the year 1910-11*, p.23.

56. *Annual Reports on the Administration of the Punjab for the year 1918-19*, pp.47-48; *Annual Reports on the Administration of the Punjab for the year 1919-20*, p.72; *Annual Reports on the Administration of the Punjab for the year 1922-23*, p.99; *Annual Reports on the Administration of the Punjab for the year 1923-24*, p.132.

CHALLENGES TO PUNJAB AGRICULTURE UNDER THE WTO REGIME

Nisha Garg & Veenu Jain***

Punjab, the most glamorous showpiece of the Green Revolution, is now at the crossroads. Globalization, liberalization and privatization of agriculture under the WTO regime pose a major challenge to Punjab's agriculture. The present paper's focus is on the problems faced by the Punjab farmers in the post-Green Revolution phase, and which continue even under the present WTO regime. It also suggests some solutions to tackle them.

The Green Revolution, which was based mainly on modern, semi-dwarf, short duration high yielding varieties and chemical fertilisers, was basically a biological chemical phenomenon. The short duration of the new varieties permitted multiple and intensive cropping that became possible with increased use of machines, particularly tractors and a new set of cultural practices. The Green Revolution in Punjab was essentially a revolution in wheat production technology. With the success of the HYV wheat seeds in Punjab, the Punjab Agricultural University started its rice-breeding programme and soon they developed new dwarf rice varieties with good yield potentials and short duration ripening. With the availability of high yielding rice varieties the farmer in Punjab brought more area under rice. The Green Revolution was most successful in districts like Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar and Kapurthala and least successful in Ropar, Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur districts. On the positive side the Green Revolution tremendously increased food production, accelerated the pace of modernization and urbanization in the State by strengthening the economic base of the rural hinterland; increased the values of the land; helped in the growth of the educational level of the farmers' children, etc. On the negative side, the Green Revolution created serious regional imbalances in the production of cereals; it resulted in the growing proletarianisation and partial pauperization of the marginal and poor peasants; accentuation of class conflict between the landowners and landless labourers; sharpened social cleavages, that is, clash between the Jat-Sikh landowners and Hindu backward and Scheduled Caste

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landless agricultural labourers, and clash of economic interests between the Jat-Sikh agriculturists and the Hindu merchant caste (Khatri, Arora and Aggarwal); structural imbalances in the economy by inducing heavy influx of migrant labour into agriculture from eastern U.P., Bihar, Rajasthan etc.

With the advent of the Green Revolution, Punjab emerged as the most advanced State in agricultural development and most prosperous State in terms of per capita income. However, agriculture has a limit to grow and in Punjab along with agricultural development there had been no corresponding industrial development. As the Green Revolution reached a saturation point and industrial development remained stagnant, the younger generation did not find gainful jobs and became attracted to the romanticised ideals of fundamentalism. While on the one hand the importance of agriculture on Punjab's net State domestic product has gone down to 24.52 per cent in 1997-98 as compared to 34.69 per cent in 1991 and 48.62 per cent in 1961; the high shares of labour force in agriculture has created a new problem. In 1961 agriculture absorbed 55.89 per cent of the total labour force; this rose to 62.27 per cent in 1971, and came down to 58.03 per cent and 55.26 per cent in 1981 and 1991 respectively. In 1961, as much as 55.89 per cent of the labour force produced 48.62 per cent of Punjab's NSDP, whereas in 1991 almost same proportion of the labour force produced 34.69 per cent of the NSDP. The share of agricultural labourers in the total workforce increased from 9.67 per cent in 1961 to 20.11 per cent in 1971 and to 22.76 per cent in 1991. The share of cultivators as a proportion of the total agricultural workforce and that of the total workforce, too, witnessed a decline, from 82.70 per cent and 46.25 per cent in 1961 to 56.89 per cent and 31.44 per cent in 1991, respectively. This is a clear evidence of the transformation of a significant proportion of the rural population into landless agricultural workers.

Punjab has 10.5 million acres of cultivable land—93 percent is irrigated—and its cropping intensity is 210 per cent. The poor economic situation has led to a cropping pattern with grain affecting soil nutrition, which can best be explained by the fact that at the start of the Green Revolution in the late 1960s one unit of fertiliser produced one unit of wheat or rice, whereas today 1.3 units are required to produce the same quantity. Punjab's soil is, therefore, getting tired; a micronutrient imbalance is taking place and the texture deteriorating. The intensity of cropping has resulted in an excessive drain on its sub-soil water. This has now reached critical proportions. The 10.5 acres of cultivable land require five acre feet of water for a paddy/wheat rotation by the conventional flood irrigation method, and therefore require 52 million acre

feet (MAF) for the State. Today Punjab has 12.5 MAF of water available from its rivers and pumps, and over 14 MAF sub-soil water drawn through 17 lakh tube wells. The end result is that it is removing more subsoil water than is being replenished, and as a consequence a part of the State is facing a dramatic lowering of the water table while its southern districts are becoming waterlogged due to a peculiar underground geological problem.

Punjab agriculture has emerged as mono-crop agriculture instead of diversified agriculture. While wheat and paddy together account for more than three-fourths of the total cropped area, the area under pulses is a mere 0.9 per cent in 1998-99, and the yield of cotton, both American and *desi*, has gone down over a period of time. This is mainly because of the fact that the wheat and paddy combine still give a better return over other crops. However, Punjab's percentage share of wheat and paddy in the central pool has experienced a downward trend during 1980-99. Punjab's shares of wheat and paddy in the central pool were 73 and 45 per cent respectively in 1980-81; these have declined to 48.6 and 39.1 per cent.¹

There is a slowdown in developmental activities even as dependence on agriculture continues. There is a growing pressure of population on land, and the size of the operational holding is declining. Continued degradation and mismanagement of land, soil, water and power, declining growth in crop yields, narrowing of genetic resource bases, a high cost of production and diminishing economic returns in farming are adversely affecting the farmers in Punjab. The level of indebtedness of the farmers and indebtedness related suicides has considerably increased during the past five years. Poorly organised marketing facilities, an absence of modern food processing industries, unfavourable terms of trade, declining public investment in agriculture and growing casualisation of the labour force have made farming no longer an attractive occupation. These systematic and technological constraints, aggravated by inequalities in access and entitlements, have made social tensions and class conflicts a fact of everyday life in the region.²

Globalization, liberalization and privatization of agriculture under the WTO regime pose another challenge to Punjab's agriculture. The WTO came into being on January 1, 1995, consequent upon the GATT Agreements of 1994. The full impact of this agreement would be realized from January 1, 2005, when it would be fully implemented.

1. Govt. of India, Planning Commission, *Mid Term Appraisal of Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)*, New Delhi, October 2000.
2. Department of Commerce, (DGCI&S).

The world agriculture is changing quickly with new rules of the game and with the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AOA). Market access, domestic support and export subsidies have become three major pillars of the AOA.³ As a signatory to the agreement, India is committed to implementing various agreements and provisions pertaining to agriculture. These include the commitments on agriculture, the commitments on market access, domestic support and export subsidies, the agreement on sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures necessary to protect human, animal and plant life and health; these are to be followed as per international specifications. The agreement aims at a substantial progressive reduction in protection to the agricultural sector so as to prevent restrictions and distortions in world trade. The overall tariff is to be lowered by 36 per cent in six years in the developed countries, by 24 per cent in 10 years in the developing countries, while the least developed nations are not required to reduce such tariffs.⁴ Recently the Government of India abolished the quantitative restrictions on 714 items which include dairy products and several agricultural related commodities.

Rice, milk and milk products and various other agricultural commodities are highly protected in advanced countries like Japan, the USA, European Union, Canada etc., while in India the tariff walls are very low. For example, in Japan 700 per cent protection is on rice and 557 per cent on milk products; Canada has 213 per cent and 313 per cent tariffs on milk products; whereas India is bound by an agriculture tariff at 100 per cent for raw commodities, 150 per cent for processed agro products, and 300 per cent for edible oils.

The minimum market access quota is to be expanded to five per cent of the total domestic consumption by December 31, 2004. However, there are certain protection provisions in the form of "safety trigger", custom duties, anti-dumping clauses, countervailing duty rights, etc. Limit of the total aggregate measurement of support (total AMS) for developing countries like India would be 10 per cent of total value.

As a result of the commitment to subsidy reduction, the upper limit of the total aggregate measurement of support (total AMS) for developing countries like 10% of the total value of agricultural production.⁵ Nevertheless, the domestic support measures (such as "green box" policies) that have minimum impact on trade are excluded from the reduction commitments. Such policies

3. Yadav, S.B., "WTO Agreement—A Review of Indian Agriculture", Third Concept, June 2004, p.24.

4. Bagchi, Sanjay, 'India and WTO', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 13-19 January 2001.

5. Rajaram, Kalpana, *Indian Economy*, Spectrum Books, Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 2006, p. 417.

include general government services in the area of research, disease control, infrastructure and food security. Besides, direct payment to producers under various programmes and certain government assistance to encourage agriculture and rural development in the developing countries are also excluded from the total AMS. Fostering private initiative in production, marketing, and distribution is essential to increase the efficiency of the food distribution system. Developing institutions to meet these new needs is also fundamental for making progress in the agricultural sector.

In its proposals on the negotiations on WTO Agreement, India has suggested that the aggregate measure of support (AMS), as the term suggests, be calculated as a sum of the product specific and non-product specific support.⁶ If India avails of this, the non-product specific support may come down to less than half of what is being shown today.⁷ In the real world, as distinct from the imaginary, survival in agriculture market depends less on comparative cost advantage than on comparative access to subsidies.⁸ Human Development Report (1997) reviewing this problem mentions, "Implementation of the Uruguay Round Agriculture Agreement over the next five years will not materially change the picture.....Agriculture remains the only area in which export dumping is accepted as a legitimate trade practice."⁹

From the facts revealed by the Human Development Report (2003) which are based on the research work done by Millennium Task force 9, 2003 and Birdsall and Clemens (2003) provide an over view of the ground reality and the intentions of the rich countries to jealously protect their own domestic interests in the name of free trade and globalization.¹⁰

In these circumstances what can policymakers in Punjab do in order to make headway in their agriculture? First, there is a need to examine closely at the global trends and explore the emerging opportunities. Second, taking advantage of the growing importance of fruits and vegetables, animal products, and fishery products in world agricultural trade and increasing the share of

6. Proposals by India in the areas of : (i) Food Security (ii) Market Access, (iii) domestic Support, and (iv) Export competition, 15 January 2001.

7. Challenges to Indian Policy Makers, Mimeo, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Washington D.C. ; January 2001.

8. Valdes, Alberto, and Joachim Zietz, "Distortions in World Food Markets in the Wake of GATT: Evidence and Policy Implications", *World Development*, Vol.23, No. 6, 1995.

9. Human Development Report, 1997, p.86.

10. Datta, Rudrar and K.P.M. Sundharam, *Indian Economy*, S. Chand and Co., New Delhi, 2004, p. 967.

these commodities in our export. Third, the composition of trade is changing faster than that of production and this provides opportunities for spreading and diversifying our agricultural base. Finally, the policymakers need to recognize the growing importance of vertical coordination of agricultural markets, quality assurance, and the role of international market information.

For Punjab agriculture it is important that the policymakers reduce their dependency on the Food Corporation of India to sell their food grains and look for alternative agricultural commodities that can be sold in growing markets in and outside of India. There needs to be a shift from supply driven agriculture to demand driven agriculture and diversify the crop base to include poultry, dairy, fruits and vegetables, basmati rice, durum wheat, pulses, oil, and oilseeds. It is important to identify niche markets that can increase the income of the farmers. Focusing on high value and value addition of agricultural commodities is important given the high transport cost of shifting agricultural commodities from Punjab to the nearest port.

On the technology side it is important to push the production frontier further to increase crop yields. The seed replacement rate continues to be less than 10-25 percent in Punjab. This calls for increased investment by both the private and public sector in research and development in agriculture. It is also important that policymakers from Punjab look for alternative technologies from international research centres. For example, super wheat from CIMMYT, hybrid and golden rice from IRRI, macdonia chick peas from western Australia, and dwarf pigeon pea from ICRISAT could be considered. Also, new advances in biotechnology such as Bt cotton provide opportunities for increasing productivity in the cotton sector. GM soybean and GM corn can give yields up to ten tonnes per hectare, thereby reducing the cost of production for Punjab farmers. For vegetables and fruits, new processable varieties should be identified and promoted rather than table varieties.

In Punjab there is a need to shift to a new production profile. Punjab farmers need to move away from common rice and wheat varieties and focus on high value crops such as basmati rice and durum wheat. Diversifying their crop base into crops like soybean and maize and increasing the production of livestock and poultry will help in reducing the pressure of land from foodgrain production.¹¹

11. Rao, C.H.H., "Economic Reforms, Agricultural Growth and Rural Poverty", *The Indian Economic Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 4, April- June 1995- 96;
"Declining Demand for foodgrains in Rural India :Causes and Implications", *Economic and Political Weekly*, January 22, 2000.

It is also important to integrate high yielding short duration legumes into the existing rice-wheat cropping system in order to have positive environmental benefits. Fruits and vegetables such as okra, eggplant, and potatoes can be produced for export in domestic markets. Developing dairy industries to produce milk and milk products for the urban centres of north India is another way of diversifying the crop base in Punjab.¹² In addition, where water availability is not a problem, development of inland fisheries is also a possibility.

More and more quality seeds for production in agriculture is becoming a serious need. Punjab farmers with their ability to maintain high quality production systems can become involved in producing seeds for the rest of the country. In summary, Punjab's nontraditional export needs to go up in line with the trend that is happening in the rest of India.

The government should promote public sector investment in agriculture, which is presently about 25% of the total investment in agriculture. There are strong complementarities between public and private investment and inadequate public investment could lead to lower private investment than desired.¹³ So the experience of 1990s clearly demonstrates that there is a strongly felt need of stepping up public investment in agriculture.

There should be removal of unnecessary intermediaries between the farmers and the final consumers of the agricultural products because a significant part of price paid by the consumers for the produce of farmers is swallowed by such intermediaries. The study undertaken by the Multi Commodity Exchange recently, shows that margins for traders, intermediaries, processors and others account for nearly half of the cost footed by consumers.¹⁴

Value addition is an essential part of transforming Punjab agriculture. Hubs of processed wheat products around modernized private industries can be developed to produce *dalia*, *atta*, *maida*, *suji*, *biscuits*, *pasta* in place of whole wheat. Transporting processed wheat products is much more cost effective than transporting whole grains. The use of soybean and maize for the livestock industry to produce high value livestock products should be a priority. Furthermore, producing Soya products such as tofu, Soya chops, and Soya milk will also add value to Soya production. Processing plants for

12. Government of India, Ministry of Finance, *Economic Survey, 2002 – 03*, pp. 174- 175.

13. Government of India, Planning Commission, *Mid Term Appraisal of Ninth Five Year Plan (1997- 2002)*, New Delhi, October 2000, p.5.

14. *Economy at a Glance*, Vol. 1, Issue 7, Feb. 2008, p.27.

processing vegetables and fruits and for processing dairy and poultry are also economically efficient ways of diversifying the agricultural base. Expanding crop diversification and increasing agro industrialization requires the building of a golden triangle with farmer, agro industry, and the banker as the corners of the triangle.

Concluding Remarks

What can the policymakers, including the chief minister of Punjab do? The immediate need is to identify a legislative mechanism to promote contract farming and to ensure the enforceability of such contracts in producing high value crops. Freeing up of land lease markets and computerization of land records will help in easing land transactions among farmers. Ensuring that land tenancy laws are not a constraint to agro industry development is also important. Market reforms related to rationalization of input subsidies and removal of all restrictions in terms of stocking limits, movements, and levies in transporting food grains should be implemented.

Institutional innovations such as warehouse receipt system, future trading, and commodity exchanges should be established to tap international markets. Crop insurance programs that will help farmers to protect themselves from the volatility of international markets as well as from vagaries of monsoon should be implemented and the success of the programs such as on Kisan credit cards should be expanded.

Developing institutions for certifying quality characteristics of agricultural produces will go a long way in enabling farmers to reach out to international markets. Institutional reforms, particularly in input supplying agencies and in irrigation systems should be undertaken. Finally, encouraging farmer's associations and cooperatives to build collective bargaining power and to enter into contracts with agro processors and supermarkets is essential for adding value to the products produced by farmers.

In conclusion, it is important that the Punjab policymakers bring the brains together, both domestic and international to bear on the future development strategies of Punjab. Getting the bankers, entrepreneurs, and farmer leaders on the same table and meeting their needs in order to make progress will be essential in the near future. Last and not least, getting the legislation cleaned up for all the controls that are pulling down the agricultural economy will be important. The rest will follow.

AGRICULTURAL CONDITIONS IN COLONIAL PUNJAB AS REFLECTED IN THE PROVERBS

*Shyamala Bhatia**

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Punjab economy. In pre-British days Punjab, a land of five rivers, and therefore a region with most fertile lands on which agriculture flourished, also had paradoxically vast stretches of wastelands which supported pastoralism but little cultivation. Moreover even the fertile areas also heavily depended on rains because without sufficient rainfall neither the wells were surcharged nor did the tributaries of most of the rivers have sufficient water, so rains were very important in this part of India. The mean annual rainfall, however, was only 20 inches in Punjab in 1901, which was lowest in India.¹ The challenge to make this area profitable for imperialist rulers was taken up by British engineers who tapped the river waters and built a network of large perennial canals that made much of Punjab region's land cultivable. Soon production of food and cash crops in Punjab outpaced that of all other regions in India.

Irrigation facilities provided by the English government helped the Punjab region possess one of the largest irrigation system in the world. By 1946, 14.85 million acres had been secured from drought by construction of canals.² Along with this, construction of roads and railways also contributed to putting Punjab on the path of economic progress and prosperity. But an essential ingredient in this recipe for progress was human endeavour and labour input without which no development is possible. Here in Punjab the English rulers found the industrious, hard working and hard peasantry ideal for taking up the challenge of turning till then uncultivated and uncultivable barren land into flourishing fields and helped imperialists realise their dream of earning huge profits from this region and laying foundation for making Punjab one of the most agriculturally prosperous regions in India.

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1. Tirthankar Roy, *Economic History of India*, p. 98.

2. Malcolm Darling, *Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*, p. 250.

In pre-British days all of Punjab and in colonial times most parts of the area were wholly dependent on nature for irrigation and the peasants had, learning by experience, mastered the art of accurately forecasting weather conditions. Experience had also taught them the best way to prepare the soil, the ideal time for sowing different crops and solutions to other agriculture related problems. This accumulated wisdom of centuries was imparted to succeeding generations, the present and future sons of soil, in the concise, pithy and clear form of proverbs.

This paper deals with cultivator's life in pre-urbanized Punjab, as gleaned through the common sayings of the time. Those sayings reflect the life style, social, cultural and economic conditions of that time and thus throw a valuable light on the various castes and communities inhabiting the land, the characteristics of those castes and communities, the social web in which they were woven, the occupational pattern of the people and economic relationships existing between them. Here we are concentrating only on some of those sayings, which are related to agricultural pursuits and reveal the cropping pattern, means of irrigation, condition of soil, importance of rainfall and habits and relationship of farmers with some other social classes. This paper is an attempt at demonstrating that those sayings contain a rich source material for historian's research. Oral history has been recognised as authentic history by well-known historians; it is both trustworthy and informative.

Traditions are kept alive in ancient societies through verbal-oral transmission. Since earliest times, knowledge has been imparted to succeeding generations through verbal communication. The historian's task is to reconstruct past history from them. The orally transmitted words contain a mine of knowledge from which, a researcher, reading between the lines and the words, can get a vivid picture of the conditions prevailing at the time. So the role of oral history is to "connect life to times, uniqueness to representativeness as well as orality to writing."³

Proverbs are a form of oral transmission, and are, thus, "shortcuts to convey a far wider vision." The proverbs are "rich, cultural prism through which to examine the micro-cultures of social conflict, consensus and change." So proverbs can tell us about "history of thought" (or thought process of the people) and the philosophy of people.⁴ They express the

3. Allesandro Portelli, 'Oral History as Genre', in Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thomson (Ed.), *Narrative and Genre*, p. 26.

4. Jan Vansina, *Oral History*, p. 11.

broader social and cultural context surrounding the spoken words. They are storehouses of wisdom and are not only meaningful in themselves but also contain historical information. They have a purpose of some kind, not explicitly the aim of recording history, but a passing reference in a proverb to a place, to an object or to a practice reveals to the historian the prevalent conditions and customs. Thus there is a direct relationship between oral tradition and social environment. The historian's task is to glean information from this type of testimony. However two things have to be kept in mind : one, the fact that proverbs are particular to the region of origin and use, and so they are relevant for that region only, and two, that it is essential that the researcher has some rudimentary knowledge of culture, language, society and conditions of the region because non-familiarity with the culture and language of the place to be studied would mean that the implicit meaning of use of metaphors, images and expressions composing a proverb or a saying would be missed by a researcher hailing from a different background.

Experience is an able and good teacher. In olden times, when printed books were not available or literacy was negligible the people sometimes encapsulated in a few words the accumulated wisdom of years to impart information and knowledge gained from experience and to teach succeeding generations moral values and social customs and conventions. These words of wisdom were repeatedly quoted. This oral repetition combined with regular usage and relevance to times and conditions helped preserve the words of wisdom for posterity. However, only those words, which contained abiding truth, survived ravages of time. These short sentences carrying loads of wisdom and depth and having the backing of personal experience of several people are called proverbs. These words have survived the test of time because they have been found useful as a teacher and as an informer of values and acceptable social behaviour. These words, not spoken by scientists of repute or by educated intellectuals, but spoken by ordinary men in the street and accepted by other common men living in the vicinity, contained oceans of knowledge gained from experience. Therefore the researcher needs to pay more attention to the rhetorical skills of the ordinary speakers in order to understand the life and conditions of the people prevailing at a given period of time.

The foreign rulers of India realized the importance of such common sayings and made admirable efforts to collect and compile the words commonly spoken and oft repeated. Malcolm Darling was so impressed with the wisdom he found among the rural folks of Punjab that he chose

the title "*Rusticus Loquitor*", i.e., the *rustic speaks*, for one of his books. And in another book, "*Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt*" also he has made extensive use of proverbs to explain the conditions and lend credibility to his arguments. Other writers also, like Ibbetson, have made use of proverbs to explain caste characteristics and life of the people of Punjab in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. These collections were for their own benefit because it helped them understand an alien culture. Today we can make use of these collected proverbs to understand the socio-economic conditions of the times. Not only that, these give valuable insights into our cultural heritage as well as our present cultural milieu. We have numerous proverbs indicating the agrarian process, the type of produce, the time of sowing, cultivation and harvesting, type of soil good for particular crops etc.

A perusal of the proverbs of Punjab clearly shows that the Punjab society was primarily a rural one, and that the principal occupation was agriculture from which the majority derived its livelihood. Some indication is also given about some parasitical classes like big landowners, *pirs* and *faqirs* and the *sahukars*. The hard working peasants due to economic necessity or religious compulsions sustained these parasitical classes but did not have much respect for any of them. The Punjab peasant was industrious, enterprising and enduring. While several tribes and castes inhabited Punjab and most of them were good agriculturists, there were some caste groups that far excelled others. The Jats, who could be found in all parts of Punjab, had no rival as cultivators. The Jats were accepted as very industrious and had inherent qualities as a cultivator and it was said that a Jat child "has a plough handle as plaything". But their simplicity was also legendary and it was said, "Though the Jat grows refined, he will still use a mat for a pocket hanky." Hard working Jats were able to earn a decent livelihood, but their simplicity was exploited by others and so it was said, "when the Jat is prosperous he shuts up the path (by ploughing) but when *kirar* is prosperous he shuts up the Jat." And another proverb explaining fruits of hard labour reaped by a Jat says "Jat stood on his corn heap and said to king's elephant drivers, will you sell these donkeys?"⁵ Gujars of Hazara district were found by the Imperial masters to be, "a simple, all enduring race, thrifty and industrious, with no ambition but to be left alone in peace with their cattle and fields."⁶ The English found the men

5. Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, p. 103.

6. Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, p. 184.

of Mali and Saini castes to be the most skillful and industrious growers of vegetables.⁷ These and other hardworking peasant castes, which had been pursuing agriculture for centuries, had mastered the art of tilling the soil in adverse conditions.

In Punjab agrarian pursuits were, along with the means of earning a livelihood, also a form of gaining social sanction and climbing up the social scale. As the saying goes : "The first year I was a *julaha* (weaver), the next year a Sheikh and if the prices rise this year, I shall be a Sayyad."⁸ This saying denoting upward social mobility on basis of economic prosperity linked with agriculture was found to be true of most castes and tribes of Punjab.

Cultivation as a profession was respected and cultivators in Punjab enjoyed a higher social status than all other professions. It was commonly said "trade as an occupation is nothing as compared to agriculture", "*Vajan vyapari kuch na dhari, jo dharia so kheti wich*", while another proverb describes attitude towards different occupations as, "agriculture is the best means of earning a livelihood followed by trade and services, while begging is deplorable," *Uttam khetri, madham vyapar, nakhidh chakri, bhikh nadaar*."⁹ The reference to begging is revealing because the evil of begging had assumed gigantic proportions in the region. In 1921 there were six lakh beggars, which means that they were four times more than the number of all employees and public servants in the province. In a village in Lyallpur the villagers had made a rule that the beggars, on payment of a nominal fee would be allotted different days for begging. So philanthropical spirit of Punjabis sustained the beggars of all kinds but their tendency to admire hard labour made the Punjabis abhor beggary.¹⁰

Agriculture in Punjab depended on nature is again evident from the state's proverbs. The farmers knew of all the different seasons with their distinctive characteristics. A long saying gives us the features of nearly all the seasons in Shahpur (Punjab). It says that the cold is conceived in *sawan* (July-August), becomes visible in *bhadro* (August-September) is born in *assu* (September-October), gets big in *kattik* (October-November) gets ready for battle in *maghar* (November-December), makes attack in *poh* (December-January), is killed in *magh* (January-February), is mourned for

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 188-189.

8. Ibbetson, *Punjab Castes*, pp. 208 & 222.

9. *Shahpur Kangri Glossary*, p. 31.

10. M. Darling, *Rusticus Loquitor*, p. 204.

in *fagun* (February-March), has its funeral obsequies performed in *chettra* (March-April), is bid goodbye in *vaisakh* (April-May); in *jeth* (May-June) hot winds blow and in *haar* (June-July) no trace of cold remains; (*savan paala nimmea, bhadro zahir ho; assu pala janmeya, kate wada ho; Maghar faujan chadiya, poh ladayee ho, mah wich pala marya, phagan kita so; chettar kul padya, vaisakh vida ho, jeth ghuliya vao, haar naa rahius bo*).¹¹

Farming was a gamble in rains in the riparian tracts of the region. Punjab, a land of six (five plus one) rivers (Beas, Ravi, Chenab, Satluj, Jhelum and Sindhu or Indus) had ample water for irrigation in some areas, and, in some years. But deficient rainfall or surplus rains, both played havoc with crops and people's lives, and a local wit accurately expressed the condition : "*Ek saal amir, ek saal faqir*" — "rich today, beggar tomorrow".¹² When the rivers behaved themselves, they were a boon to the villagers and they said, "he who lives on the banks of any river neither goes hungry nor thirsty" (*Darya da hamsaya, na bhukha na trihaya*), but when the rivers were in spate, as they were with unholy regularity, the common man felt that "to go and live by the river was to place a babe in witch's lap,"¹³ and it was also felt and commonly said, "*Bsander Bet, na tan kapre na roti pet*", i.e. he who lives near river bank, would have neither food to eat nor clothes to his back.¹⁴ Low lying lands near the rivers were considered to be good and fertile and best for cultivation, and so much beneficial for the owners that it was said, "low lying lands and well to do relatives are always an advantage," "*Nivi jamin te uchhe sakke, jad hai nafa*".¹⁵ When the rivers were kind to the cultivators, the river water enriched the soil and very little effort was needed to harvest a rich crop, so it was said river "Chenab takes away clay and gives gold, river Sindhu takes away gold and leaves clay", "*Darya chanab kalai leve to sona deve, darya Sindh sona leve te kalai deve*".¹⁶

Wells were sunk for irrigation purposes in all parts of Punjab but especially in areas near the rivers and sub-montane districts (Muzaffargarh, Gurdaspur, Multan, Dera Gazi Khan, Hoshiarpur) well irrigation was

11. *Shahpur, op. cit.*, p. 7.

12. Darling, *Punjab Peasant*, p. 61.

13. *Ibid.*

14. *Multani Glossary*, p. 3.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

16. Darling, *Ibid.*, p. 97.

extensive.¹⁷ There were *kaccha* wells that cost between Rs. 30-40 to sink but were not long lasting (their life being two to three years only) while the *pukka* or masonry wells were more durable with a life of thirty years. But the cost of sinking a *pukka* well was prohibitive and many villagers had to resort to co-sharing of wells where the villager had to wait for his turn (*wari*) and then got certain fixed hours (*pheras*) for using the well.¹⁸ So the cultivators who had the means to sink and own their own wells were much better off but even those farmers who owned the wells individually had to put in hard labour as the well had to be worked day and night in shifts which were of six hours duration each. But many cultivators had to work for two shifts and half the night, especially in months of *Poh* and *Magh* (mid December to mid February). So this ownership of wells had its own hazards as the agriculturist had to wait for his turn to use the well and then sometimes he had his turn to draw water from midnight to midday, so it was said *Jinha jute khu, unha di na sukh na sute ruh* (those who own wells have no time to sleep and relax).

Though by mid-twentieth century, Punjab achieved the distinction of possessing one of the largest irrigation network in the world and irrigated area was more than 50% of total cultivated area,¹⁹ yet, most of the cultivators were dependent upon rain for irrigation. Moreover the water from wells, canals and rivers also could be utilized for irrigation only if rains were sufficient and recharged the existing water resources. So the rains played an important role in farmer's life. Fortunes of the people depended upon *Indra devta* or the rain god. In central Punjab, *Kwaja Khizer* was the river God and *gur* and grain was offered to him to appease his wrath and keep him happy, so that he would be benevolent and rains would be timely and sufficient. If the rains were good, not only the farmer but rest of the community also felt good. If rains failed, there was famine from which the moneylender, the trader, the grain trader and shopkeeper benefited while rest of the community starved. The former made money out of latter's misery. So farmers in most parts of Punjab were entirely in the hands of nature with harvest always a gamble in rain. As a result the rustic farmers who had, for times immemorial depended on rains, were always looking at the sky for signs of rain and had perfected the technique of forecasting weather from the looks of sky and flow, speed and direction of

17. M. Mufakharul Islam, *Indian Agriculture and the Raj*, p. 37.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

19. M. Islam, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

the wind. It was commonly predicted that if the wind was blowing in northern direction it would bring clouds, while wind blowing in eastern direction brought rain, and wind which was blowing in southern direction stopped rain even when it had begun drizzling, and if a south wind did bring rain it was disastrous and covered the whole country with water. ("*uttar mihn, purav vasai, dakhan vasde nu vanjayee, je dakhan vasae, tan jal-thal paani chha banae.*")

While the danger of famines was ever present in the region, the farmers believed that they could be sure of a good harvest if the months of summer (*Jeth*) were very hot and rain followed in the month of *Haar*, (*Jeth tae, Te haar vasae, os mulkh de nede kal kiyu jave*).

If the farmers noticed that the clouds were looking like partridge, they predicted that the rains would be copious, *Titter khambi badli, rann malai kha, oh vasse oh ujare kade na khali ja*.²⁰ If the peasants saw dark half of moon on eighth day of month of *Haar*, they were hopeful of such bountiful crop that not only man, but also his animals would have enough to eat. The farmers of Punjab did not celebrate thundery clouds because experience had taught them that thundery clouds did not bring rain and that if there was much thunder there would be no rain - "*io garaje so vasde nahi*".²¹

Rains meant that farmers could go ahead to plough and prepare the land. If the peasant noticed a rainbow in the morning, he was sure that it would rain the next day and so he got ready with his plow to prepare his land, "*Hala pave tirkal, haalia hal sambhal, haala pave din charhe, haali hal dhare*".²²

If the rain was scanty no tilling was possible and there was apprehension all around that crops would fail and all would have suffer deprivation, food shortage and hunger. If the peasants noticed clouds going east, they knew that there would be no rain and so they warned their wives to stop cooking; if they saw that the clouds were going towards west, then they were sure that the crop would be plentiful and instead of one all could eat five *rotis* or to their hearts content, "*badal vanji ubhar, tapal moondha maar, badal vanji dila, hik pakendi, punj paka*". Winters are severe in Punjab but the inhabitants of the region felt the severity of the cold only

20. *Shahpur Kangri Glossary*, p. 2.

21. *Shahpur Kangri, op. cit.*, p. 2.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

when the winds were strong, "*Pala poh na pala mah, pala hai vao ji.*" Thus the direction and speed of the wind enabled the farmers to forecast weather in the coming months.

Rains in *Assu*, were a matter of celebration for the Punjabi farmer because these showers were considered good and beneficial for both autumn and spring crops; '*Asu vase hari sanwani, neenv laye.*'²³ Rain in different seasons was, according to the proverbs, indicative of different types of crop expectations, "*vasse poh, Te mutthi kho, vasse mahn, Te boote-boote kha, vasse phagun Te kaddhi lagan, vasse chait, Na khal mewe Na khetra.*"²⁴ i.e. 'If it rained in *poh*, wheat could be plucked with hands because it would blossom again; if in *mah*, every plant of wheat would give a fistfull of stems; if in *phagun*, your luck was sure to change for the better; if in *chetra*, the crop would be plentiful.'²⁵ A farmer was happy if there were plenty of showers (a hundred) in *savan*, some rain (three showers) in *Bhadon*, and at least if it rained once in *assu* for this ensured bountiful crop (*savan de sau, bhadon de tre, assu da hik, jeda lah deve sikk*).²⁶ The rains in winter, near the Diwali festival were extremely beneficial and even the indifferent and slothful farmers could be sure of a rich harvest as a result of showers in this month. '*vasse Diwali, jeha phosi, oha haali.*'²⁷

But if the soil and land were barren then no amount of hard work or effort would be of use and all effort, it was believed, would go waste. '*Raparr rahaavaa, magaz khapawa*' (to cultivate *raparr* land is an exercise in futility), and so also was the case with *kalrashi* land where nothing would grow and any attempt at cultivation was bound to fail, or in the proverbial language the harvest would be of only clay : *kalrashi bhoera, Te haasil mitti chae.*²⁸

Preparation of land and soil is important for getting best results. Ample and timely rain would be of no use if the soil is not prepared properly or is not well fertilized, this the farmers knew well and advised all to put manure in the field and reap a rich crop, '*paa roori, khaa choori*', that the crops need proper care and plenty of manure was also

23. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

28. *Multani, op. cit.*, p. 1.

communicated as "*jeh tu ohi pae khet, do kheti le ikk khet*" (if you put sufficient manure in the farm then you can get double the crop). Similarly, to stress the point, it was also said that as a man's body requires oil for lubrication, so is manure necessary for cropping, *koora changa khetia, jiu aadmi nu ghiu*.

Land, it was advised should be left uncultivated in the month of *Mah* so that it has time to recuperate its fertility and then in next month preparing the land for sowing was begun by first ploughing the fields and in the month of *saawan* the land was required to be irrigated - "*Mah na rahia, visakh na uria, sawan na bahria, tre gal gaia*."²⁹ Ploughing in June-July was essential to reap a bumper crop, otherwise, it was said that the crop would be scattered and deficient, "*Haarh na vahi harhi, phit bharue di darhi*."³⁰

Not only was timely ploughing essential, but the timing was specified according to each month of the cropping season and specific to each crop; the farmers knew that fields had to be ploughed at least once in the month of *Haarh*, twice in *Sawan*, four times in *Bhadron*, and if this practice was not followed then it was no use ploughing in *Assu*, because then, whether one ploughed or not, the seeds would not germinate and flourish - "*Haarh Di ikk, saawan dia do, bhadron dia chaar, assu vahe bhawe na vahe*."³¹ That land should be properly prepared and ploughed to get bountiful crop was also communicated through the proverb - the more you plough, better the yield, "*jitni vaah utni gah*."³²

Repeated ploughing was advisable "*Sau sidha ikk suhaga*", i.e. oftener you plough the land, more would be there to thresh, and the produce would depend on the work one has put in.

But ploughing also should not be done indiscriminately. Experience had taught the farmers that different types of crops needed different treatment. Crops like carrot required less ploughing (sixty) as compared to sugarcane for which hundred times of ploughing had to be done - "*Sathi sivi gajra, sau sivi kamad*". Similarly the crop of gram needed less preparation of soil as compared to other crops - "*Chhole ki janan vah, mah ki janan dha*".

Timely sowing of crops was also an important aspect of cultivation. It was said that wheat sown in the month of *katak* was sure to be fruitful

29. *Shahpur, op. cit.*, p. 9.

30. *Shahpur, op. cit.*, p. 8.

31. *Shahpur, op. cit.*, p. 8.

32. *Shahpur, op. cit.*, p. 8.

and bountiful crop could be hoped for in the same way as one could rely on the support of the eldest son, "*Kanak katak di, put jetha*." Those peasants who got late in sowing had to suffer prospects of failure of crop and loss of income and were warned that they would have to pay the land revenue from their savings as this crop would not yield any thing, "*Maghar Poh ralavan jihre, palaun hala devan*". If the peasant was lazy and delayed sowing then he could not be sure of a good crop and the crop would be ruined so badly that he would be able to harvest the crop with his bare hands, or in other words there would be nothing to harvest - "*Garh Po, te hathi khu*".³³ Peasants were exhorted not to forget that organic manure is essential for valuable crops like sugarcane, maize and wheat, "*kanak kamadi chalia te hor te kheti kul, ruhri baj na hundia, tu na jai bhul*."

Not only that, seeds have to be sown at a proper distance to enable the plants to get space, air and manure to grow, develop, flourish and produce to optimum capacity so that the grower gets full crop without wasting any land area. If the spacing between the plants is insufficient, then growth of plant is stunted which adversely affect the production. Without going to any university the rustics learnt this lesson and gauging the importance of this, tried to impart their knowledge to succeeding generations in a very illuminating and interesting way. The proverbs gave the measurements of easily available things and often seen animals to tell the distance at which various and different crops should be sown. The common crops in the region at this time were—bajra, cotton, wheat, *jowar*, and sesame. How these were to be sown and the proper distance between each plant at the time of sowing for getting best results was conveyed thus: sesame, it was said, should be sown widely, rice thickly, cotton at a distance a frog can jump and maize so widely that a man can easily pass through the plants even with a quilt around his body - "*Til chhithi, dhan sanghni, daddu tapp kapah, jhoom maar rajai de wich makai de ja*" and another proverb communicated that "sesame should be sown rather thick, *jowar* as far apart as a frog jumps, cotton plants should be sown very wide apart (*Til ghanere, dadu tapp jawar, kai kai tiggh vand vavardi, kar gei vinah*) and another proverb advised to sow *bajra* at a furrow's distance, *jowar* as far apart as a frog jumps, wheat close together, cotton so far apart that even a camel can sit down between the two plants ("*Dande Dande bajra, daddu tapp jowar, ghani kanak-utth behe vandvar*").

33. *Shahpur, op. cit.*, p. 10.

Animals played an important role in the agriculturist's life in several ways and often find place in various proverbs of the state. The dread of cattle-thieves and dacoits made the farmers live close together, along with their cattle, in the comparative security of a village. The villages were usually a little distant from the fields. In some cases the farmers had to walk as much as two and a half miles to reach their farms. This practice was recommended and endorsed in the proverb which says that four things are bad, wheat sown thin, sesame sown thick, an old axle for Persian wheel and a crop close to the village (*Kanak patli, til sanghne, khuh purani lath, Muddh pawahe khetri, charo chaur chapat*).

Animals were domesticated and used by the farmer for ploughing. But some farmers were too poor to own cattle of their own and had to borrow the animals for ploughing. In such cases, the proverbs advise the borrower thus, "if the animals are not your own drive them as you like or take as much work as you please" "*Daud parae te halli hor, jiwe bhawe unje tor*". But this borrowing was not liked and when the farmer could afford, he preferred to own cattle as it revealed by the saying, those peasants are to be commended and hailed who own their own animal "*vaahi unna di jinne ghar de dhagge*".

Physical strength both of man and animal was required for preparing the farm and it was realized that ploughing was a strenuous job for both – *Hal balal, mote da, kam na chhote mote da*. If the cultivator was healthy and the animal was weak, then also the work suffered, *Mara dhagga khasma nu khai*.

Hard work was well appreciated in all walks of life in Punjab. The peasant did not care for his health and comfort and loved to work, "*Kaam pyara hai cham nahi*". Due to heavy demand on time farmers had no time for any other activity. Even if a death occurred in the family, the farmer hurriedly performed the necessary rites and got back to work, "*Kanak jatt nu pai biai, moi ma bharole pai*".³⁴ Thus the idea was propagated that hard physical labour would yield rich dividends and peasants could live like kings, *Gole hoke kamaiye, Te Raje ban ke khaiye*. This quality of working hard was thus ingrained in young minds by the elders : one should never sit idle, if there is no other work available, spend your time digging a pit and filling it up, "*vela jewe kade na bahuy, Toia putt ke bharda reh*". Keynes,

34. Sukhwant Singh, 'Concept and Value of Proverbial Evidence', *The Panjab Past and Present*, October 1985, p. 286.

the economist, was made world famous by propounding the theory that work should be provided to all and if no other work was available then government should give the people work of digging up pits and filling them up. Here in Punjab we find the ignorant, uneducated rustics, having learnt from experience imparting the same wisdom to all. In the absence of any alternative to agriculture, the elders' advise was to cultivate land and enjoy sweet things of life, *Jamin nu vah te khānd-kheer kha* and they also advised hard labour on land to obtain maximum output from it, "*dab ke vah te raj ke kha.*"

The wisdom of rotating the crops also was known and recommended in the proverbial language. Rotation of crops was practiced. Experience had taught the farmers that wheat should not be sown after fodder crop was cut because after this crop sugarcane planting was much more profitable, "*Seji de baad kamidi biji, ander var ke saun, kanak de baad kamidi biji, kita jia da khaun.*"³⁵

Proverbs of Punjab also reflect the business acumen of the people. That partnership for cultivation was prevalent in this region is clear from the proverbs that tell us that one should be fair in dealing with his partner, "*sanjhi da tu huq pehchan, apne naloan changa jaan*" while in another proverb, one of the partners laments that if the partner is bad and of a quarrelsome nature, then the whole year is wasted, "*sanjhi kupata, saal barbad*". An idea of the tenancy system and the landlord-tenant relationship can also be had from the proverbs in use. Peasant proprietors also employed cultivators. But the owners of land were exhorted to be fair and just to their labourers because it was believed that only good treatment ensured satisfactory work ("*Malik jo kare ryayatdari, taan oh karda changi wahi*"). There was a *kamin* system. That system involved payment of wages to the *kamins* in kind at the harvest time. The *kamins* therefore completely at the mercy of their master, the landowner, had to serve their masters and please them in all circumstances, "*Jat rutha, kamin mana, kamin rutha, and kamin mana.*"

The peasants lived from hand to mouth. Land revenue, which was called *haala*, had to be paid in time so it was important to sow and cultivate in time in order to subsist and earn. As already seen, proverbs suggested the importance of timely sowing for getting a good crop. Another proverb was coined to stress its importance to prevent revenue having to be paid from

35. *Ibid.*

pocket (*"Jo charde katak haarhi bijan, ghar anaj na mevan, maghar poh ralawan jehre, pallon hala dewan"*).

Apprehensions about the loss of crop, from whatever reason, also received mention in proverbs. Pests were one such quite common cause of concern. When the crop was attacked by insects, the farmers suffered the loss of entire crop, *"Kungi lagdi kanka naal, kheti kade na hoi bahal"*. Another danger that ever lurked in the background of peasants' mind was of untimely rains. Showers in the months of *vaisakh* and *Jeth* when the grain was thrashed, ruined the harvested crop leading to heavy losses for the farmers. So the farmers prayed, *"Visakh Jeth gah gahe, inhi mahine na vasse"*, ye God the crop is ready, please do not let it rain.

So the farming had its own hazards. When the harvest was good, the peasants felt like they owned the world and when the crops failed the farmers felt like prisoners of circumstances. They feared the impending doom and in such trying times felt agriculture was a noose around their necks and this was beautifully described in the proverb *"wahi Badshahi, je na janmen te phahi"* meaning, farming is as good as kingship, but if the crop fails, it becomes hangman's noose.

The cultivators had to bear the tyranny, not only of nature, but also of fellow human beings. Besides the weather, the ruling elite also created problems for the peasantry. The farmers felt that if the governor/administrator was tyrannical, then it was no use toiling and they felt like giving up cultivation altogether, *Je jalim hoi wali, sattu jamin Te saru hali*.

Another fellow human being who often made life miserable, and more often than not, unliable, and still seemed to them the only savior in times of adversity, was the village moneylender. Majority of the farmers lived from hand to mouth and had no savings to fall back upon. Moreover the foreign rulers were never sympathetic and even if there was no harvest, there was no reprieve from government revenue, which also had to be paid in time. So the only way out for the poverty-stricken agriculturists was to knock at the door of the moneylender and plead with him to save their honour. In return the farmers pledged their next crop, *"Shah de agge jori hath, tu hi rakhi sadi pat, Ja nibhaye inho Jat, tore like le fasal hali da"*. Thus the farmers who toiled day and night had no hope of getting just rewards for their hard labour and all the fruit was reaped by the moneylender, *"Jotam jora, pani laya, ghar ko dhuke da gogra, vanj desu Kirar nu"* (I yoked my pair and irrigated cotton, and now we will have to go and give hard earned cotton pods to the moneylender).

Side by side with the farming community stood the business community comprising of Khatri and Aroras. They were shopkeepers; traders and moneylenders all rolled into one. The moneylenders at this time were mostly Hindus as can be realized from the saying that 'neighbourhood of Thar is like a *kirar's* beard, sometimes visible, other times deserted, (*Thar da gwand kirar di dari*). These *kirars* had close relationship with the farming community and were looked upon as Shylocks sucking the blood of the *Jat* community. The elders warned that a crow, a dog and a moneylender is not to be trusted even though it might be asleep (*kaon, kirar te kute da, visah na karea sutte da*). Nevertheless they constituted the most enterprising section of the society and it was believed that the *khatri* could make a profit out of a losing proposition also, "*je khatri sir khe vi pave, ta wi khatri khat liyave*". They occupied an important position in the economy, but their position was perceived to be one of exploiters and suckers by the farming community. Dependent on rains, the peasants suffered heavily when rainfall was deficient and crops failed. In those difficult times they turned to the moneylender cum trader, so the moneylenders played a crucial role in the lives of the agriculturists. The moneylender's wealth was thought to be like a granary for the peasant to draw upon in times of need, "*Shah da Dhan Te Kohle da Dhana*". In those difficult times they turned to the money-lender cum trader without whose assistance the farmers could not subsist and said "*Guru bin gat nahi, shah bin pat nahi*". Though the *pir* or guru and the moneylender both helped the poor farmer in starving of hunger and retain his respect, yet they were exploited by both of them. The starving landowners borrowed *bajra* for eating and they had to repay one and half maunds of wheat for every maund of *bajra* borrowed from the *shah*. This meant a rate of interest of about 50%. But the farmers had no alternative though they abhorred indebtedness and knew that if they borrowed nine, they would have to return thirteen, "*Na nau nakad Na tehra udhar*". And another proverb says that a borrower lives through hell, *jis ne nahi dekha bhutna, wo dekh lave halwai, jis ne nahi dekha Dhramraj wo ban dekhe karjai*. The moneylender on the other hand faced all the risk of bad loans. It was also said that "no confidence is to be placed in a debt due from a peasant, clarified *ghi* kept in an earthen vessel, *Kirar's* beard which he could shave off at any time and a father of daughters who would have to spend money on their marriage," (*Jat da lehna, ghare da gheo, kirar di dari, dhian da peo*). But they lent readily, though they said that their courage ought to be admired in giving loans

because it is difficult to recover the principal from poor peasants, "*Den dileri, ughana mushkil*". But this was merely a rhetoric because the moneylenders rarely suffered a loss and as soon as the crop was harvested the moneylenders recovered their loans in form of grain, cash and cattle.

The poverty stricken peasants had nothing to fall back upon. All accumulated wisdom failed to help them when such heavy odds were stacked against them. That is why they always believed that fate was more powerful than all three—bullocks, ploughman and the rains, "*Kujjh Na kiti thoka tria, Dhanda, halia te miha*". In such times only tobacco smoking—the *hukka* was their friend and pain reliever, *Hukka pinde tehri naali nu chede, hukka nimana dardmand di tek hai*.

Thus the wise and experienced peasantry of Punjab continued to struggle and suffer, never losing heart and giving its best to soil, moneylenders and the rulers. He had nothing to learn about cultivation from any authority and could teach a few lessons to the educated. As Malcolm Darling has written "so far as skill goes, it may be doubted that whether the peasant of Chhach has anything to learn even from a Royal Commission. He ploughs his land ten or twelve times for wheat... and manures it heavily and his system of cropping produces nearly two acres of crops out of one acre of land. Importance of capital is seen in amount spent on manure, 100 an acre for vegetable to 270 for snuff."³⁶ Through the centuries, Punjabi peasantry has faced several challenges and experienced life's ups and downs. The accumulated wisdom of ages has served as an advisor and guide as well as a warning agent to succeeding generations. Now much of Punjab has changed. Political boundaries have been redrawn. The agrarian scene has also altered for the better. Cropping pattern has changed, commercial crops, to a large extent have replaced the cultivation of food grains in most parts of Punjab, which has brought prosperity to many people. But the Punjabi peasant still depends on rains and looks up to the sky to see the clouds and welcome the rains or to plead to God to send showers in time. The pattern of wheat and sugarcane and cotton plantation has not changed. But the Punjabis are still indebted to their ancestors who, in their wisdom, showed the way to the present generations of farmers and put them on to the road to prosperity. Past wisdom is still relevant and lighting up their lives and illuminating their path with the torches of ancient wisdom encompassed in the proverbs handed down through the generations.

36. M. Darling, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

CONTRACT FARMING IN PUNJAB : A BOON OR A BANE

Ramna Singla & Pawan K. Singla***

Contract farming is increasingly being presented as a solution for the problems of Indian agriculture, by major international donor agencies, multinational companies and even the government. It is argued that private sector participation will be promoted through contract farming and land leasing arrangements will allow accelerated technology transfer, capital inflow and assured markets for crop production, especially of oilseeds, cotton and horticulture crops.

The government too seems inclined to accept this view, judging by recent moves—the amendment of the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Act in 14 states which allows farmers to sell their produce in open markets, has given a spurt to contract farming. Reliance Life Sciences, ITC (agri-business division) and Pepsico are some of the prominent companies that either already have started contract farming projects or are discussing them actively with governments. Pepsico was first of the block, with its contract farming of tomatoes in Hoshiarpur district of Punjab.

The UPA government's Approach Paper to Eleventh Plan gave priority to the development of contract farming. Now, a working group set up by the National Development Council, under the leadership of then Punjab Chief Minister Amrinder Singh, has also made a set of proposals to promote contract farming. In addition to suggesting greater liberalisation of laws and rules for crop contracts, it has proposed tax rebates for food processing, duty free imports of machinery and equipment, exemption of market fees, etc., and liberalised imports of seed varieties for contract farming programmes.

Taking a significant stride towards diversification of agriculture, Punjab launched the country's largest contract farming programme with private sector participation. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by the Punjab Agro Foodgrains Corporation and Mahindra Shubhlabh Services Ltd, a subsidiary of Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd, in the presence of then Punjab Chief

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Minister Amrinder Singh. About 100,000 acres of land would have been diverted from other crops, notably paddy, to maize, a crop that is going out of cultivation in the state, in the ensuing kharif season under this programme.

Through contract farming more and more private companies would be encouraged to develop backward linkages with the farmers. The objective would be to maximise profits and minimise risks in farming. Forward sales contracts made with the user companies will enable the farmers to opt for either a fixed price contract or a market-linked price contract. Contract farming is defined as a system for the production and supply of agricultural or horticultural products under forward contracts between producers/suppliers and buyers.¹ The essence of such an arrangement is the commitment of the cultivator to provide an agricultural commodity of a certain type, at a time and a price, and in the quantity required by a known and committed buyer, typically a large company.

According to the contract, the farmer is required to plant the contractor's crop on his land and to harvest and deliver to the contractor a certain amount of produce, based upon anticipated yield and contracted acreage. This could be at a pre-agreed price, but need not always be so. The typical contract is one in which the contractor supplies all the material inputs and technical advice required for cultivation, while the farmer supplies land and labour.

Contract farming in India effectively began with the entry of Pepsi Foods Ltd. (Pepsico) in 1989 by installing a tomato processing plant in Hoshiarpur, Punjab. Pepsico followed a method whereby the cultivator plants the company's crops on his land, and the company provides selected inputs like seeds/saplings, agricultural practices, and regular inspection of the crop and advisory services on crop management.

Subsequently Pepsico and other companies have used similar methods for the cultivation of food grains (Basmati rice), spices (chillies) and oilseeds (groundnut) as well, apart from other vegetable crops such as potato. Until recently, this model of contract farming was considered a success in terms of diversifying cultivation in Punjab and improving the income of farmers.

The Punjab government has argued that contract farming is the best means of crop diversification in a region where there is a real question of ecological survival and sustaining natural resources like water and soil in a

1. Micro Scan (Printed Version)—*Is contract Farming Really the solution for Indian Agriculture?*, pp. 1-3.

reasonably healthy state. However, since contract farming is based on private corporate interests that are inherently profit driven, there is no reason why these should coincide with the ecological requirements of the region.² So the question arises whether contract farming is a boon or a bane for the agricultural development in Punjab.

One of the most critical issues associated with contract farming is that the land which is currently used to produce staple crops such as rice and wheat will instead be used to produce crops required by the food-processing industry, and also have a significant overseas market.³ The switch to contract farming therefore leads to a rise in exports. In fact, many corporates enter contract farming to fulfil the export obligations of various benefits and subsidies they receive from governments. It is believed that contract farming will double agricultural exports from India to \$20 billion by 2010. And since Punjab is one among the major contributors to the total agricultural production in India, so it will definitely gain from increase in total agricultural exports from India.⁴

With debt rampant, and rising seed and fertilizers costs, contract farming appears a blessing, since all the inputs along with the knowhow will be provided by the corporate entity, and there is also a guarantee of purchase of the produce after harvest.⁵ With agriculture increasingly seen as a risky proposition, the promise of economic security within the contract farming system may be very attractive.⁶ The health of soil a few years hence is a legitimate concern, but many farmers may ignore this to ensure their immediate gains from contracting with companies.⁷

In addition to above various other advantages of contract farming are :-

*Farmer gets exposure to world class agrotechnology.

-Planting materials/ healthy disease free nursery .

2. *Ibid.*, p. 3

3. Bhaskaran, S., and Smith, R.H. (1990), Regeneration in cereal tissue culture—A Review, *Crop Sci.*, p. 30.

4. Deaton, A. and Dreze, 'Poverty Inequality in India, A Re-examination', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 7 Sept.2002, p. 373.

5. Hazell, Peter B.R., and C. Rama Samy, (Eds) 1991, *The Green Revolution Reconsidered* Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press for IFPRI.

6. James, Clive, and A. Krattiger, 1999, "The Role of the Private Sector". *"Biotechnology for Developing Country Agriculture; Problems and opportunities"*, (ed.) G.J.Persley, -2020, Vision Focus 2, Brief 4 of 10, Washington; IFPRI.

7. Arora, J.K., Marwaha, S.S; Grover, R.(editors), *Biotechnology in Agriculture and Environment*, p. 209.

-Crop monitoring technical advice free at his doorstep.

-Agricultural implements.⁸

- * The farmer obtains an assured up front price & market outlet for his produce.
- * Focus shifts from prices to returns per acre - driven by productivity increases.⁹
- * The private sector gets requisite quality material regularly at predetermined prices .
- * Promotes long term planning and investments.

Indeed, much of the recent corporate interest in Punjab agriculture has been in basmati farming which is one of the great water-guzzlers. Crop diversification can be more effectively encouraged through a system of changing the relative prices of crops accompanied by a supportive system of public agricultural extension services.¹⁰

Farmers in Punjab have become increasingly resentful of a system that has put them under the total control of corporations, which will decide not only the crops grown but also the procurement price. The growing incidents of the pre-determined prices being reduced on the pretext of inferior quality of the grain or crop, have added to such resentment.¹¹ The issue has become so critical that several times in recent years, the state government agency that had designed the contract farming programme in the first place (Punjab Agro Foodgrains Corporation) has been forced to step in and buy basmati rice that was being rejected by the contracting companies.¹²

Contract farming, in a political economy, is one mode of capitalist penetration of agriculture for capital accumulation and exploitation of the farming sector by agribusiness companies.¹³

Opponents of contract farming also worry that with corporations

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8. Alexander, K.C., *Society, Agricultural Development and Transformation in India*, p. 103.
 9. Juma, Calestous and A.Gupta, "Safe use of Biotechnology for Developing Country Agriculture; Problems and opportunities (ed. G.J. Persley)-2020, Vision Focus 2, Washington: IFPRI.
 10. Visil, I.K, *Developing Cell and tissue culture systems for the improvement of cereals and crops*, J.Plant Physiol, p. 128.
 11. Noordman, W.H and Janssen, D.B. (1995), Desorption of adsorbed organic pollutants stimulated by biosurfatant, *Soil Environment* .5, 1319.
 12. Bollag, J.M and Liu, S.y, (1972), Hydroxylation of Carbaryl by Soil fungi *Nature* (London), p. 177.
 13. Jackson, M.L., *Soil Chemical Analysis*, (New Delhi), p. 203.

dictating the crops to be grown, there will be an inevitable loss of natural seeds. "Basically, it will mean the transition from agriculture to agribusiness, which is not welcome."¹⁴

Contract farming in Punjab has certainly led to more employment opportunities for some labour, since the labour intensity of most vegetable crops, except potato is much higher than for traditional crops like wheat or paddy. However, wage levels have been pushed to subsistence levels by increased competition for work through migration. Also, male labour being displaced by mechanisation while lower-paid women and children are increasingly employed for the more labour-intensive activities.¹⁵ The problem of finding alternative employment for displaced cultivators has become a serious concern.

A report of the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, Hyderabad is quite candid about the risks for farmers. The report says, "Contract farming models can sustain in the long run only if the initiative for empowerment comes from the farmers rather than the user (corporate). Another moot point is that in the existing models, farmers are largely 'price takers', while the contracting firm 'makes' the price."¹⁶ The report also says that the contract farming is "very promising in its early years. Farmer benefits from improved technology and higher productivity, quality and production. The contract price does not matter much in the early years. Once the farmers are confident of being able to deploy new technology, problems start cropping up." The enforceability of the contracts too is uncertain. The NIAEM report observed that "if the market price is more advantageous than the contract price, farmers renege on the contract."¹⁷

The Punjab experience is generally considered to be among the more successful in India thus far, but even this shows that contract farming holds numerous problems for agriculture in developing countries like India. It tends to displace labour quite substantially; marginalises the direct cultivators who lose control over the production process and often even over their land;

14. Ocampo, J.A. and Hayman D.S.(1980), *Effects of Pesticides on mycorrhiza in field-grown barley, maize and Potatoes*, Trans, Bnt. Mycol. Soc. p. 413.

15. Singh, R.P., Chari, M.S., Raheja, A.K and Kraus, W.(1996), 'Neem and Environment', Vol.I, Vol.II, *Proc. World Neem Conference*, Bangalore 1993, p. 1225.

16. Anonymous, (1994), *Annual Project Report Dir. Biol. Control*, Bangalore. p. 28.

17. Anonymous, (1995), *Report, principal Investigators AICCRIPC Agronomy, Entomology and Plant pathology*.

encourages more capital-intensive and often less sustainable patterns of cultivation; can result in greater insecurity and lower income for farmers because of use of quality measures to lower the effective output price being paid by contractors; can even deny farmers the benefits of higher prices which could be instead absorbed by corporate contractor with local monopsonistic power;¹⁸ propagules monoculture which reduces food security and the possibility of livelihood diversification through livestock; relies excessively on the use of lower paid women workers and child labour; and increases and accelerates the process of casualisation of labour.¹⁹

Given these evident problems, why is contract farming still being promoted so assiduously? This is really because public institutions have failed to provide farmers with the essential protection and support required for viability on a sustained basis. What cultivators in rural India need most of all today is the following combination: a basic price support mechanism that ensures that costs are covered; efficient extension services that provide information about possible crops, new inputs and their implications and new agricultural practices relevant for the particular area; and the availability of reliable and assured credit at reasonable rates of interest.²⁰

There is no reason why this combination cannot be delivered by the public sector and by healthy and efficiently functioning marketing co-operatives. But the last decade has seen a collapse of agricultural extension services and the provision of agricultural credit, across rural India.²¹ The Minimum Support Price System is also being run down. And co-operatives have been shackled by over-regulation, bureaucratic control and political interference, so that they have also mostly not shown the desired results.²² However, private corporate firms will not necessarily deliver these requirements either, since their interest would be to maximise profits in the short-term

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18. Schumtterer, H.(1990), *Properties and potential of natural pesticides from the neem tree, Azadirachta indica*. Ann. Rev. Entomol., 35,271.
 19. Schumtterer, H. and Ascher K.R.S.(1986), Natural Pesticides from theNeem Tree, *Proc. 2nd International Neem Conference*, Rauischholzhausen 1983, p.587.
 20. Schumtterer, H. and Ascher K.R.S. (1987), Natural Pesticides form the Neem Tree and other tropical plants, *Proc. 3rd International Neem Conference*, Nairobi 1986, p. 703.
 21. Schumtterer, H. and Ascher K.R.S. and Rembold, H.(1981), Natural Pesticides form the Neem Tree, *Proc. 1st International Neem Conference*, Rottch-egern 1980, p. 297.
 22. Singh, R.P., Chari, M.S.,Raheja. A.K and Kraus, W.(1996), Neem and Environment, Vol.I, Vol.II, *Proc. World Neem Conference*, Bangalore 1993, p. 1225.

rather than ensure the long-term sustainability of cultivation.²³

Of course, not all contract farming need be bad for farmers - in the best case scenario it can add to and diversify farmers' income while creating sustainable cultivation practices. However, to promote this more desirable type requires active state involvement. If contract farming is to improve the condition of cultivators rather than intensify the ongoing agrarian crisis, it is important to have a system of state regulation, intermediation and monitoring of contract farming practices to ensure the interests of farmers.

23. Warthen, Jr. J.D.(1979), *Azadirachta indica*. A source of insect feeding inhibitors and growth regulators, *Agriculture Reviews and Manuals*, p. 21.

HUMAN SUFFERING DURING MARTIAL LAW (1919) AT AMRITSAR IN GIANI TIRLOK SINGH'S PUNJABI NOVEL 'JALLIANWALA BAGH'

Harmandeep Singh Sohal*

Killing of hundreds of innocent people at Jallianwala Bagh on 13 April, 1919 was an event without precedence in the modern Indian history. The events leading to the massacre had started unfolding during the last week of March 1919 and reached their climax on the fateful day. But that was not the end. It was a beginning of just another chapter of suffering and traumatic experiences of the people of Amritsar. Not only did the common people, the elite and former collaborators who had become suspect in the eyes of Martial law administration, also suffered humiliation of various degrees. The events following 13 April opened the eyes of the people to the nature of the British rule and they became more and more inclined towards the nationalist ideology than ever before. Henceforth, Amritsar became the most active centre of political movement in the Punjab. During the period of martial law, people of all ages including children and women became the victims of the barbarity of British rule. They were humiliated before their beloved ones, paraded naked in the police stations and beaten up mercilessly.

A number of historical works has been produced on the theme by historians important among whom are V.N. Datta, *Jallianwala Bagh* (1969),¹ Raja Ram, *The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre* (1969),² Alfred Draper, *Amritsar: The Massacre that ended the Raj* (1981),³ S.R. Bakshi, *Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy* (1982),⁴ Satya M. Rai, *Punjabi Heroic Tradition* (1995).⁵ They published their research papers and books based on a variety of archival material and other sources. Besides historians, Jallianwala Bagh massacre also inspired a number of creative writers including novelists, poets, play writers and story

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1. V.N. Datta, *Jallianwala Bagh*, Lyall Book Depot, Ludhiana, 1969.
2. Raja Ram, *The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre*, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1969.
3. Alfred Draper, *Amritsar: The Massacre that Ended the Raj*, Cassel, London, 1981.
4. S.R. Bakshi, *Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy*, Capital Publishers, New Delhi, 1982.
5. Satya M. Rai, *Punjabi Heroic Tradition (1900-1947)*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1995.

writers. Historical studies are the analysis of available facts and accounts, but they do not address the psychological trauma suffered by people which is the forte of creative writers.⁶ Giani Tirlok Singh is one of those who made this subject in their writings. His novel *Jallianwala Bagh* is one such example. This novel was published in 1969 on the 50th anniversary of Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. The present paper is an attempt to analyse the plight and suffering of innocent people during martial law followed by massacre at Amritsar, which have been narrated in the writing of Giani Tirlok Singh's⁷ Punjabi novel *Jallianwala Bagh*.⁸ An attempt has been made to delineate the nightmarish experience of the people during the period of martial rule in the Amritsar.

I

The novel is set in the capital of England, London in the first week of March in 1940. Second World War had been started. German fighter planes were throwing bombs on the London city and entire atmosphere was trembling with the sound produced by weapons. But Gulab, the beloved of Ram Muhammad Singh wanted to marry with him, but he did not have any interest in such romantic fascinations.⁹ He was thinking about those nightmarish days when Jallianwala Bagh incident had taken place and British Government adopted repulsive attitude during the martial law. Suddenly, German fighter planes dropped bombs on the London city and spontaneously Ram Muhammad Singh shouted *Khoon Ka Badla Khoon* (Blood for Blood).¹⁰ Gulab could not understand the meaning of his words. When she asked him about the whole

6. Mushirul Hasan, "Memories of a Fragmented Nation: Rewriting the Histories of India's Partition", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XXXIII. No. 41, 1998, p. 2662.

7. Giani Tirlok Singh, one of the most highly regarded Punjabi novelists was born in the village of Kamalpur in Amritsar district. In 1928, he went to Singapur with his family and took his primary education from Anglo-Chini school. In 1934, he came back to India and completed his religious study from Panjab University, Lahore. After that, he became professional writer. His first novel *Maharani Jind Kaur* was published in 1940. He took special interest in Sikh history and freedom struggle of India. He wrote several novels such as *Shaheed Bhagat Singh*, *Jallianwala Bagh* (1969), *Shama Te Tufhan* etc. His main concern in all novels has always been to expose those evils which influenced the society and humanity.

8. Giani Tirlok Singh, *Jallianwala Bagh*, Bhai Mehr Singh and Sunder Singh, Amritsar, 1969.

9. According to Giani Tirlok Singh, his real name was Uddham Singh and he went to England on a specific mission as a member of Naujawan Bharat Sabha headed by Bhagat Singh to kill Michael O' Dwyer, the Governor of Punjab responsible for Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. Finally, he succeeded in his mission on 13 April, 1940 when he killed Michael O' Dwyer in London. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

matter Ram Muhammad Singh shared a story of human suffering and humiliation after Jallianwala Bagh tragedy during martial law imposed in Amritsar, twenty one years ago.¹¹ Entire city was under the army rule headed by General Dyer. People were not allowed to go outside from their houses before 7 a.m. and after 8 p.m. The curfew was imposed in the city during the nights and a person who came out after 8 p.m., was ordered to be shot by the British authorities. In this novel, Giani Tirlok Singh tried to present a vivid picture of atrocious behaviour of British army in the days of martial rule through the memory of Ram Muhammad Singh, who narrates the whole story of human trauma.¹²

Ram Bagh was the main camp of British army in Amritsar. All barbaric acts were carried out here by the army. The scene of Ram Bagh was very horrible as many indians who were arrested during martial law were placed here and badly beaten up by soldiers with heavy sticks. They were paraded naked in the garden. A man was beaten up by a British officer who was trying forcefully to accept their involvement in the case of Bank robbery and killing of an English person in the Hall Bazar after Jallianwala Bagh incident took place. However, that man was innocent and was not involved in the crime but still he was badly tortured. His condition was serious and blood was continuously flowing from his body. He wanted to drink some water. But water was not offered to him by the officer who was smiling and then he asked him to drink his urine. This was something totally inhuman treatment of the British army with the innocent Indians during martial law. This man belonged to the *Loon Mandi* area and was handed over to the army by a Local Chaudhri who had some personal differences with that man. So another feature highlighted during this phase is that few people who had personal enmity with certain individuals deliberately handed over them to the army in the fake cases and then these people were badly tormented by the army in the camps.¹³

Similarly, another act of human suffering occurred in the Ram Bagh. A person named 'Sham Sunder' was arrested by the army. His offense was that he was wandering in the street after 8 p.m. which was not allowed during those days. Actually, he came out from his house in search of water because his mother and sister had not taken it since many hours. So their condition was becoming serious. Water taps in the houses had been cut off by the

11. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-72.

administration. Water was not easily available. People often went outside from their houses to take water from the wells. After his arrest, Sham Sunder was sent to army camp in Ram Bagh. When he reached there, an officer started beating him. He was forced to put off his clothes and then paraded naked in the garden. Soldiers were laughing on him. However, he was continuously embarrassed in front of many soldiers but still he was crying for mercy. But the British officer was busy beating and abusing him. He had reached a critical stage and his bones were cracked. He wept and cried due to pain in the body. That is how Indians were treated badly by the British army in Ram Bagh during the martial law in the city.¹⁴

II

The position of walled city was even much more serious than Ram Bagh during that time. There was one street called the Kucha Tawarian where English lady Miss Sherwood was assaulted by the crowd during riots of 10th April.¹⁵ However, she was rescued by a kind man in the street but during martial law, General Dyer imposed a condition in the same street that if any body wanted to pass through the street, he or she must cross by crawling on his belly. The person who would not obey the order should be beaten by sticks. This order was for all people including children, women and for old persons as well. The tyranny of British army in the street had been reached on its zenith. No one cleaned the street and water had been collected in the whole street. People were forced to cross through the unclean street by crawling on their bellies. According to Giani Tirlok Singh, "this type of inhuman and traumatic act was not even done during the rule of truculent kings in the fifth and seventh century A.D". Women could not go outside from their houses. Children were totally helpless as they were unable to do this. But men were forced by the administration to open their shops in the city.

Honourable citizens Lala Isher Das and Lala Labh Chand also resided in the same street where 'crawling order' was implemented. They were also forced to open their shops in the market. So, they came out from their houses to the street. However, it was difficult for them to cross the street by crawling on their bellies but they were forced to do so. When Lala Isher Das entered the street, a British Indian soldier came to him and asked to follow the 'crawling order'. When Lala Isher Das could not do this the soldier abused him "*O'Kute, Besharm* (O'Dog, shameless) go by crawling along the lane". Actually before

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-74.

15. Ian Colvin, *The Life of General Dyer*, Unistar, Chandigarh, 2006, p. 150.

this, Isher Das was in the favour of British rule in the country and he even donated rupees twenty five thousand for the army fund during World War-I to the British Government. Although, he had good relations with Deputy Commissioner and Governor and considered himself an elite person in the city but now his entire respect had gone with humiliating treatment by British army. At that moment, Isher Das realized that he belonged to a slave country having no self respect under British rule. He was very angry and his eyes were red. He was looking helpless. His condition was pitiable and clothes were dusty. Soon, a British officer came and hit him with the handle of his gun ordering him to "go straight". This was really a humiliate and shameful experience for Lala Isher Das. Then he remembered that time when he criticized Mahatma Gandhi and Congress for their activities against British Government and justified the British rule in the country by saying that Indians were unable to rule over the country. After many difficulties, he crossed the street by crawling on his belly. When he reached the shop, he felt so embarrassment. He got many injuries on the body. On the other hand, Lala Labh Chand also faced similar situation and received insult and humiliation from the British soldiers.¹⁶

The notorious 'crawling order' was not the only order passed during Martial Law. The *salaaming* (saluting) order was one which was also imposed in the city. People were enforced to do *salaam* to General Dyer as well as to the other British officers. In this context, one incident happened in the Guru Bazaar where General Dyer and Sergeant Mr. Plomer were passing through the main market of the Bazaar. People were running away from the troops. But some people were giving them *Salaam* by bowing their heads. But one youngman named Hargopal gave them army salute. Actually, he had completed his graduation from Christian missionary college from Calcutta and knew the army parade. But by doing this, General Dyer became angry and he slapped Hargopal.

Although, he was feeling proud by giving army salute to them but he was shocked because of the entire incident. Then, he was arrested and shifted to Ram Bagh on the next morning. General Dyer was standing there. Firstly, he abused Hargopal "you son of a pig, you don't know how to salute". He ordered a soldier to taught him how a slave countryman gives the salute. The soldier firstly put off Hargopal's clothes and then started beating him. Other soldiers standing near were also abusing and laughing at him. After receiving

16. Giani Tirlok Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 76-80.

many injuries on the body, Hargopal gave salute to General Dyer by bowing his head. Then, General Dyer smiled and replied; "now you know how to give the salute to the British. 'You Black Indian', don't forget that you people belong to a slave country." After few hours, he was released from the army camp. He was feeling mentally as well as physically suffering. This was something like a bad dream in his life.¹⁷

Famous poet Hasham Shah Wrote:

*"Tenu Husan Khraab Karenda
Te Menu Samajh Sataaya"*

(If youth and beauty don't allow a person to feel comfortable, sometimes over-smartness also sinks the man or becomes his enemy).

These lines were accurately fit in the case of Islam Ali Khan who became the victim of British arbitrary rule. By profession, he was a Barrister and completed his study from England. But if he had not shown the over-smartness, he would not have suffered so much. He was sent to Jail and was insulted in front of his wife. Actually, he was a man of open ideas as he completed his degree from an independent country. But he forgot that he belonged to a slave country having no right. He was not satisfied with British administration during martial law. So, he went to Deputy Commissioner's house to discuss the pitiable condition of lawyers who were performing the duty of constables in the city.

After reaching the residence of the Deputy Commissioner, he requested him to take necessary steps to improve the pitiable condition of lawyers who were treated badly by British officers and policemen. He further said that all the members of Bar Association were respected persons and knew all the legal matters. Even some lawyers like Rajinder Sharma and Bal Mukand were forced to do the job of *coolies* (The person who carries the luggage of the people). Then, the Deputy Commissioner asked him that they were Hindus and not to worry about them. But Islam Ali asked the Deputy Commissioner that they both were his brothers and they all were *Hindustanis*. So this was the time when British tried to divide the unity of Hindu-Muslim on the basis of communal ground. The Deputy Commissioner was now angry and shortly he replied "*Kale Bharti Kute* (You Black Indian Dog) go away from my house otherwise you will be in Jail. You belong to a slave country and still demanding the rights of a citizen of independent country". After a few minutes, Islam Ali returned home and felt so much embarrassed. After a short while, police came to his

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 92-96.

house and arrested him without his involvement in any case. The police brought him to the police station where he was beaten up and insulted. However, he was a lawyer, he knew all the legal matters but he was helpless at that time. Now, he understood the pitiable condition of his country where the British were ruling.¹⁸

Apart from British officers, some Indian police officers who were serving under British rule also committed heinous crimes during martial law. They not only tortured the common public but also involved the people in serious crimes. British Government was giving many gifts to such officers in the form of money and *Jagirs*. These people continuously performed illegal actions against innocent people of Amritsar city. Sahib Rai Sood and Malik Sahib Khan were far ahead to perform such harsh activities. Both police officers always used vulgar language against Indians. A mother came to police station, whose two young sons recently married were arrested by the police. Someone told her that only Sahib Rai could help in that matter. So she reached the police station and appealed Sahib Rai that her sons were innocent. They did not commit any crime. But Sahib Rai was not a kind hearted person. He replied to the old lady that her sons were murderers. They would get death sentence. But after a few minutes, he told the old lady that still there was one way to save her sons. If her sons became *Sultani Gwah* (approver), they could be saved. They would have to give witness against a few people in the case of Bank robbery and murder of an Englishman in the Hall Bazaar. But the old lady replied that her sons were not present in city on the day when those incidents took place. The old lady was not ready to adopt this path to save her sons. Then, Sahib Rai used vulgar language and abused her. No one was listening her appeal in the police station. She was crying and returned home with a gloomy face. This was the exact position of Indians during black rule at Amritsar.¹⁹

Many people of certain areas like Guru Bazaar, Majith Mandi, Loon Mandi, Chawal Mandi, Papran Wala Bazaar, Bazaar Kathaian and Bazaar Mai Sevan suffered during martial law. Some senior citizens like Lala Ghanpat Rai, Lala Devi Das, Kahan Chand and Abdulla Ustad were persecuted in the police stations. They were not allowed to sleep. Although, they were not involved in any crime, but still they faced many difficulties, because they did not become approvers. Many false cases had been registered against them and they became

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-112.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 113-116.

the victims of atrocious behaviour of British army.²⁰

Nevertheless, there was no case of serious disorder in Amritsar after 15th April, 1919 but still martial law remained imposed in the city and numerous inhuman, illegal acts were done by the British army against its natives. They were treated like animals. This reveals that British were at their worst during martial rule in India. When they failed to suppress the Indians by putting them under psychological pressures, they started inflicting physical injuries. Actually, they wanted to give the clear and sound message to the Indians that those who would rise against the British, would be treated like this. This exposed the brutal nature of British Government during their rule over India. With this started a movement all over the country which within less than thirty years brought an end to the British Raj.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.

INTRODUCTION OF ADULT EDUCATION IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR (1937-1941)

*Vinod Choudhary**

The third *Dogra* ruler, Maharaja Pratap Singh died on September 23, 1925. His nephew, Raja Hari Singh whose formal coronation ceremony took place on February 25, 1926 succeeded him. Maharaja Hari Singh had been educated at the Mayo College of Princes, Ajmer and trained in the Imperial Cadet Corps, Dehra Dun.¹ He was a liberal, generous, enlightened and farsighted ruler. The western culture, thought and education had impressed him a lot and he wanted to modernize his State on that line. He realized that the modern education hold the key to modernize his State. He, therefore, took keen interest in spreading modern education among the masses.²

Maharaja Hari Singh was a great luminary and he was interested in the universalization of education in the State. The percentage of literacy in the State was very low and majority of the illiterate population was above the school going age. He, therefore, resolved to introduce a scheme for the education of the adults. In 1937-38, the scheme was envisaged with the establishment of an Adult Education Office at Srinagar. The cooperation of other Departments was sought to popularize it in the State.³ On October 16, 1938, the scheme was inaugurated. The day was observed as the Adult Education Day in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. On this day, the processions of students along with their teachers were taken out in the streets of the towns and the villages and speeches were delivered to public to popularize the adult education in the State. A post of Adult Education Officer and two Assistant Adult Education officers, one each for Jammu and Kashmir was created.⁴

The cooperation of public organizations and voluntary workers was

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1. *A Note on the Jammu and Kashmir State*, The Ranbir Press, 1928, p. 6.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 46.

3. Annual Administrative Report of Jammu and Kashmir State from October 15, 1937 to October 16, 1938, p. 184.

4. Annual Administrative Report of the Boys Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir State of the year 1938-39, pp. 16-17.

also sought for the success of the adult education scheme. The State Education Department served as a guiding agency to coordinate the activities of other Government Departments and the voluntary workers. Each primary school was given the responsibility of managing one centre of the adult education while a secondary school was supposed to manage two centres. The State Education Department had itself set-up seven hundred and sixty four adult education centres. The departments like the Co-operative, Medical, Sericulture and Revenue were also required to set-up the adult education centres. The State Government directed the Revenue Department to provide light for all centres situated in rural areas and also provide accommodation to those adult education centres which were not functioning in the schools. The State Government directed the Local Bodies to arrange the facility of light for all adult education centres situated in urban areas. The Municipal Committees of Jammu and Kashmir and some Town Area Committees were also directed to provide funds to the adult education centres. In September 1939, the concerned authorities organized the State Exhibition in Srinagar in which mass propaganda was carried out among the illiterate citizens of the State and a large number of people were taught to sign their names.⁵

As regard the timeable and the duration of the adult education programmes, the Government was very particular and, it was resolved that from three to four months an adult had to pass all the necessary tests. A set of instructions and a syllabus was issued for the guidance of the teachers. An evening was decided to be the most suitable time. The cooperation of the *Lumberdars*, *Zaildars* and other officers was sought to persuade the adults to attend these centres. It was naturally a difficult task to persuade the illiterate adults to attend the classes in the evening after their hard day's labour. All the executive heads of the different departments were directed to send their illiterate employees to attend these centres. A large number of illiterate constables of Police attended these centres.⁶ Even education was provided to the prisoners and the illiterate warders in the jails of the State.⁷ The Sericulture Department, Jammu completed the task of imparting education to all its workers. The Sericulture Department, Srinagar also

5. Annual Administrative Report (General) of Jammu and Kashmir State from October 17, 1938 to October 16, 1939, pp. 262, 263.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

7. Annual Administrative Report (General) of Jammu and Kashmir State from October 17, 1939 to October 15, 1940, p. 207.

started the work and it had one thousand and five hundred adults under instruction at the end of the year 1939. The State Government held a scheme under its consideration whereby the employees engaged by the contractors of the Public Works Department and the Forest Department could be educated. The private employers of labour had also been approached, and some of them were already conducting work in this direction. A large number of people got benefit of this scheme. The number of adult education centres increased day by day.⁸

The State Government was equally concerned with the adult education of women. The Adult Education Centres for women were set-up in many important towns in both the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir. The adult education for women was linked up more closely with training in simple crafts.⁹

The State Government supplied free reading material to these adults. During 1938-39, fifty-six thousand books were distributed among the adults. The Government spent rupees three thousand, eight hundred and nine for the publication of books for free distribution to these adults.¹⁰

Libraries were set-up in the villages to provide useful and interesting study material for the newly literates who might otherwise relapse into illiteracy. The State Government opened one hundred and twenty five libraries during 1938-39. These libraries were mostly situated in rural areas. The village school teachers also acted as the librarians. They gave the benefit of the library services not only to the people of their own village but also to the people of the surrounding villages. The State Government spent rupees nine thousand, nine hundred and sixty-one on the purchase of books for the libraries and boxes for their storages.¹¹

The workers were paid honorarium according to the number of literates passing out from these centres. It was fixed at rupee one for each literate adult, subject to a maximum of rupees twenty in case of government employees and rupees thirty in case of the others.¹² The State Government

8. Annual Administrative Report (General) of Jammu and Kashmir State from October 17, 1938 to October 16, 1939, p. 263.

9. Annual Administrative Report (General) of Jammu and Kashmir State from October 17, 1939 to October 15, 1940, p. 211.

10. Annual Administrative Report (General) of Jammu and Kashmir State from October 17, 1938 to October 16, 1939, pp. 263, 264.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 264.

12. Annual Administrative Report (General) of Jammu and Kashmir State from October 17, 1939 to October 15, 1940, p. 207.

paid rupees five thousand, one hundred and twenty-six as honorarium to the workers and as the expenditure on rent and light for the first four months. From the fifth month onwards, the charges for light and rent were to be met from local subscriptions and funds.¹³ In 1939-40, the Prime Minister of the State, the Development Minister and the Inspectors of Schools for Kashmir province donated medals to reward the outstanding teachers of the adult education centres.¹⁴

The State Government realized from the experience of the last two years that the task of imparting literacy to such a large and scattered population was not easy. The main reason was that the adults had shown little interest for acquiring literacy. The State Government, however, spared no efforts to overcome this obstacle and utilized all the available resources for getting appreciable results. The Education Department which was the pivot on which the entire scheme revolves, shouldered the greater part of the burden. The other departments of the State and the private agencies whenever and wherever available were freely encouraged and utilized in the services of this cause.¹⁵

As a result of the strenuous efforts made by the State Government and all other concerned, it was possible to set-up two thousand, seven hundred and forty-three Adult Literacy Centres in the Kashmir Province and seven hundred and fourteen in the Jammu Province. During 1939-40, the total number of adults under instruction was fifty-six thousand, four hundred and twenty-eight in the Kashmir Province and ten thousand, two hundred and seventeen in the Jammu Province. The total strength of the literate adults who were actually examined and granted literacy certificates by the officers competent to do so, was twenty thousand, four hundred and forty-eight in both the Provinces. This represented a marked increase over the figures of the previous year though these figures were very small, compared to the magnitude of the task which the Government had set before itself. It was undeniable that the Adult Literacy Scheme was making a steady headway and the people's apathy was being reduced.¹⁶

Some of the Government Departments rendered valuable services in

13. Annual Administrative Report (General) of Jammu and Kashmir State from October 17, 1938 to October 16, 1939, p. 264.

14. Annual Administrative Report of the Boys Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir State of the year 1939-40, p. 12.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

16. *Ibid.*

making the Adult Literacy Scheme a success, and internal difficulties which stood in their way were being gradually overcome with the assistance of the concerned authorities. The Director of Sericulture, Jammu with his staff turned out as many as one hundred and fifty-seven literates which was nearly the total strength of the illiterate staff under him. The Director of Medical Services accepted and put into practice all the suggestions for the education of the prisoners and the illiterate warders in the Central Jails of the State. The officers of the Revenue Department also did work of outstanding merit in this connection. The State Government appointed the Assistant Inspector of Schools, Anantnag who was responsible for the outturn of the largest number of literates within his jurisdiction. The Inspectress of Girls' Schools, Jammu and Kashmir also did praiseworthy work in connection with the education of illiterate women. During 1939-40, the total number of women made literate in Kashmir Province was four hundred while two hundred and seventy-one in Jammu Province.¹⁷

During 1940-41, the drive against the adult illiteracy gained a further momentum. Though geographical conditions and insufficiency of staff hindered the progress of the Adult Education Scheme, the results achieved represent a substantial advance over the previous year. Through inter-departmental co-operation and the steady devotion to this national service displayed by a large number of government officers, students and public, the number of adults actually examined and certified as literate was twenty-three thousand, one hundred and nine. The women gave good response towards education in spite of leading a secluded life and getting little leisure from their household works. The total number of the literate women was one thousand, eight hundred and fifty one. In addition to it, sixty-one thousand, eight hundred and eighty adults were receiving instruction at the various Adult Education Centres. The total number of Adult Education Centres was four thousand, two hundred and fifty-three. Another foremost achievement was the complete eradication of illiteracy in the Silk Factory, Jammu where the operatives had now set-up a reading room for the adults.¹⁸

In 1940, the State Government extended the scheme of adult education to Poonch *Jagir* and the frontier districts. The Adult Libraries

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 12.

18. Annual Administrative Report of the Boys Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir State of the year 1940-41, p. 15.

formed an integral part of the scheme and helped in the cultural uplift of the masses and prevented the literates from relapse into illiteracy. The stock of books in these libraries covered a variety of interesting subjects. These subjects were useful for village folk. The Adult Education Department published suitable Primers and the Readers for the adults. The books were also published in *Bodhi* script for the adults of Ladakh region. The Adult Education Officer compiled a handbook for the general guidance of the adult workers.¹⁹ In addition to it, free books in Urdu, Devnagri and Gurmukhi were distributed among the adults who were attending these centres. The charts were supplied to the Adult Education Centres. These charts provided useful and interesting information to the adults to attract them to acquire education. This visual and graphic approach also helped in attracting greater public attention.²⁰

On September 27, 1941, the Adult Literacy Day was observed at Srinagar under the Chairmanship of Khan Bahadur Pir Illahi Bakhsh, the Minister of Education of Sindh province to popularize adult education in the State. On November 27, 1941, the Adult Literacy Day was also observed at Jammu under the Chairmanship of the Director of Education. The day was observed at other places in the State and the large number of persons participated in it. The observance of these days serve to convey the message of the adult literacy among the masses and to regenerate the enthusiasm of the workers for more vigorous work in the future.²¹

Thus, the introduction of the adult education was a very important step in removing illiteracy and ignorance from the State. The scheme helped a lot to spread literacy in the State.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Tri-annual Administrative Report of the Boys Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir State from October 16, 1941 to April 12, 1943, p. 15.

21. Annual Administrative Report of the Boys Education Department of Jammu and Kashmir State of the year 1940-41, pp. 15, 16.

DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN PUNJAB (1937-1947)

*Des Raj Grover**

Education is the foundation stone of every nation. Primary education has the same importance in the life of a child as a sound foundation has in respect of a massive building. If education will be of right type it will enable pupils to stand on their own legs, and make them better equipped with knowledge and skills.

Primary education is the time when a way of life begins. Primary education is the basic education which the child needs at this formative stage. It develops in different aspects of his growth.

"India has the distinction of running the largest network of Primary education centres in any democratic country in the world. There are about 9 lakh primary schools with a strength of over Ten Crore students. Survey has revealed that about two lakh habitations are still without primary schools. Nearly 40 percent schools do not have buildings and black boards, and about 60 percent have no drinking water facilities for children. Only 20 percent primary schools in the country have a full quota of teachers. About 30 percent schools have only one teacher for all classes. There are over 30 percent primary schools in the country with no teachers at all."¹

With the introduction of provincial Autonomy in 1937, a new chapter in the History of Indian education was opened. Out of the eleven Provinces of British India, the Congress could form its ministries in seven. This gave new hopes to the people, for they thought that the Congress, with the entire field of provincial administration into its hands would now be able to evolve a national system of education to which it was committed.²

A wave of enthusiasm spread in the country as a result of this political change. Education began to be over handed and reorganised in

* Bir Kuteer, 7, Adarsh Nagar, Fazilka, Distt. Ferozepur (Punjab).

1. *The Tribune*, Monday, January 2, 1995, p. 17; Also see, the article, 'Poor School Environment', by Durga Bhardwaj.
2. S.S. Dikshit, *Nationalism and Indian Education*, Sterling Publishers, Delhi, 1966, p. 157.

every province. An era of educational renaissance ushered in. Literacy movement or Adult Education movement, education of women and the untouchables and a number of similar other projects for mass education were launched with great vigour and zeal.³

In 1937, Mahatma Gandhi infused a new life in Primary and Secondary education by finding the formula of Basic Education at Wardha. This strengthened the hope for the enforcement of free compulsory primary education in the country.

Meanwhile in 1939, owing to the outbreak of World War-II and as a protest against the Government's policy of compelling India to participate in War, Congress ministries tendered their resignations. Thus, the rising tide of educational expansion was for the time being stemmed by these circumstances. Later on in 1942, the famous 'Quit India' movement was launched. All the prominent Indian leaders were placed behind the bars. It was definitely a set back to the ambitions of Indians. The central and the provincial governments devoted their entire efforts in war. This resulted in scarcity of funds for educational purposes. As a matter of fact, these five years may well be called the dark period for the education of the country. Educational institutions were kept merely alive. This led to stagnation in its growth.⁴

With the sure indication for victory for the allies, in the beginning of 1944, the post war reconstruction projects began to be chalked out. In the sphere of education too, a post-war development plan, popularly known as 'sargent plan' was submitted by the Central Advisory Board of Education.

On the basis of Sargent plan reorganisation of education began to take place in the country and during the period following 1945, education began to spread. The position of England had become weak after second world war. She was too weak politically to keep India under subjection any more. The Indians were also struggling hard to achieve freedom.

After 1945, a separate Education Department was established under Central Government and its responsibilities were entrusted to a member of the Central Executive. In 1946, the University Grants Commission was also established.

Under the provincial autonomy education received special attention in the beginning. But during the period of the second world war, it received a great set-back. Though the expenditure on education during the war period

3. P.L. Rawat, *History of Indian Education*, p. 239.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

increased yet the number of educational institutions showed a downward trend. After the war, however, we again notice educational expansion.⁵

When the Congress ministries assumed office in seven provinces there was a popular demand for the introduction of universal, free and compulsory Primary Education.

Congress itself was committed to it. But could not be met unless huge sums of money was provided in the budget and it was not easy to raise it by fresh taxation. Mahatma Gandhi came forward with the proposal that plans of Mass Education need not be held up for want of funds and that universal, compulsory and free education of seven years could be given to every child if the process of schooling could be made self-supporting by imparting education through a useful and productive craft. The crafts like spinning and weaving, embroidery, tailoring, paper-making and toy making are undoubted occupations that can easily be learnt and handled without much capital outlay.

The primary education should equip boys and girls to earn their bread by the state guaranteeing employment in the vocation learnt or by buying their manufactures at prices fixed by the State.⁶

It were these revolutionary proposals which were placed before the public through a series of articles in the *Harijan* written in 1937 that later on developed into the Wardha Scheme of Basic Education to meet the financial difficulties.

Gandhiji's articles on Basic Education published in the *Harijan* created a storm and violent controversies arose over several aspects of the proposal. The self supporting aspect of Basic Education became the centre of controversy. It was thought desirable to get the scheme examined by expert educationists. The first conference of National Education was called at Wardha on 22nd and 23rd October, 1937 to consider the new system of education proposed by Gandhiji.

The conference then appointed a committee under the presidentship of Dr. Zakir Hussain to prepare a detailed syllabus on the lines of the above conference. Within the short period of two months Dr. Zakir Hussain Committee submitted a report which has since become a fundamental document on the scheme. The committee explained the principles and objectives of the scheme, worked out details for a number of crafts, and

5. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

6. 'Educational Reconstruction', pp. 52-53, quoted in Naik and Narullah's Book, *A Student's History of Education in India*, 1951, p. 336.

made valuable suggestions regarding such important aspects of the scheme as the training of teachers, supervision and examination and administration.⁷

In Punjab during the year 1937-38 there were 7723 primary schools of which 5858 for boys and 1865 for girls.

The enrolment of boys during the year was 378,456 and female 112,953. There was an increase of 64 boys and 44 girls schools.

The total cost of primary schools rose by Rs. 88,953 in 1937-38. There were 9612 trained and 2260 untrained teachers employed in primary schools.

During the year 1938-39 there were 7831 primary schools which were 108 more than the previous year, 5922 for males and 1909 for females. The total cost of Primary Schools rose by Rs.89,772 in 1938-39. There has been a total increase of 235 teachers, 202 trained and 33 untrained. The opinion of the divisional inspectors was in favour of the trained teachers. Efforts were made in each district to refresh teachers. They brought beneficial results.

There were 8037 primary schools during the year 1939-40, 6002 for males and 2035 for females. There was increase of 80 male schools and 176 female schools. There was an increase of 9138 scholars. The total cost of primary schools rose by Rs.81808. There was total increase of 129 teachers, 91 trained and 38 untrained. Praiseworthy efforts were made by the inspecting staff to refresh teachers. Their efforts were met with considerable success in improving the quality of institutions, increasing enrolment, better average attendance and in reducing stagnation. The increased efficiency of the staff reduced the cost of maintaining primary schools.

During the year 1940-41, there were 8284 primary schools in all, 6086 for boys and 2196 for girls. The total cost of primary education rose by Rs.37,601. There has been a total increase of 114 teachers, 76 trained and 38 untrained. An increase of 111 girls schools and 4969 scholars was one of the encouraging features of the year. The total increase in the expenditure on girls education was Rs.1,74,175/-.

During 1941-42 there were 8468 primary schools in Punjab, 6159 for boys and 2212 for girls. There was an increase of 8103 scholars. The total cost of primary schools increased by Rs.3,23,193.

During 1942-43 the number of primary schools for boys had gone up to 6211 and girls 2216 and enrolment to 4, 11, 715. There were 12, 419

7. *Ibid.*

teachers—9993 trained and 2426 untrained, working in primary schools.

During 1943-44, the number of primary schools for boys decreased by 5 to 6026, but the girls primary schools went up by 21 to 2237. The enrolment in boys schools however increased by 41 to 4069 and girls enrolment increased by 2372.

During the year 1944-45, the number of primary schools for boys had gone up by 24 to 6230 and girls gone up by 33 to 2270.

The enrolment in boys schools went up by 7,311 and in girls schools by 4914. There were 12,469 teachers working in boys primary schools, 9,405 trained and 3,064 untrained, including 630 teachers who possessed special departmental certificates. In girls primary schools total number of teachers were 4506—3080 trained and 1426 untrained.

During the year 1945-46, the total number of primary schools for boys were 5876, it decreased by 354 and those for girls 2568, it increased by 298. The number of pupils increased by 5,95,345 in boys schools and 94,268 in girls schools. The total expenditure increased by Rs.1,54,97,675 in boys schools and Rs.34,19,479 in girls schools in India.

During 1946-47, there were 6585 schools for boys and 2475 schools for girls. There was increase of 709 boys schools and decrease of 93 schools for girls. The expenditure was 18,43,766 more than the previous year.

There has been increase in number of teachers both trained and untrained. In most states the shortage of trained teachers was the main obstacle in the improvement of education. Attempts had been made to introduce and enforce compulsory education at the primary stage; but they did not meet with much success because of illiteracy and economic backwardness of parents, lack of educational facilities, account for the failure to enforce compulsion effectively.⁸

In 1945 the war came to an end but no progress of educational reorganisation could be expected immediately due to uncertainty of the political situation.

When the Congress again came to power, it could not pay any serious attention to the subject of education. In 1946, an interim Government was formed under the leadership of Sh. Jawahar Lal Nehru and all the ministries came under Indian-hands. The Central Education

8. Reports on the progress of Education in Punjab, 1937-1947.

Department was now called Central Ministry for Education. It took special interest in educational matters. British rule in India came to an end on August 15, 1947.

A century has passed since the Despatch of 1854 emphasized the importance of mass education but still the number of children of school going age could not actually reach a figure that was expected. Only the introduction of compulsory education was the remedy to make India literate. Illiteracy was more seen among the girls.

The local bodies who were mainly responsible for spread of primary education were also unwilling to carry out the policy of compulsion because of lack of qualified teachers, ineffective teaching and supervision and financial difficulties.

The war against ignorance could be fought successfully if the Government and the people have the mind to do so and make every sacrifice for winning this war.

SINGH SABHA AND EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN IN PUNJAB

*Karamjit Singh**

The Singh Sabha was one of the most significant reform movements organized by the Sikhs in the Punjab in October 1873, at Amritsar. It aimed at introducing reforms in the Sikh religion as well as society by removing doubts, suspicions, useless rituals and rites, ceremonies and customs that had cropped up in the Sikh society with the passage of time. Encouragement of Punjabi language, literature and education among the Sikhs was its another important objective.¹

By this time many socio-religious vices were not only prevalent in the society, but also had made their roots deep and firm. These were hindering the progress of the Sikh community. These vices had been posing threat to the identity of Sikhism. The vices which were very prominent as well as damaging were equally responsible for the miserable condition of the women. Child marriage, polygamy, female infanticide, non-existence of widow marriage, *purda* system and many more were the main vices. Singh Sabha as an organization and its leaders raised their voice with determination against these vices which stood in the way of women's emancipation in particular and Sikh society in general.

The Singh Sabha movement launched a campaign against the *purda* system which had deprived women of their right to participate in the socio-cultural life of the community. The *purda* was much popular among the women of upper strata of the Sikh society. However, the middle class Sikh families were equally affected by this ill. The practice at that time of stay-at-home women had been always and mostly preferred in the Sikh society whereas we are fully aware that the founder of Sikhism and also his successors had denounced and preached against this very ill in the contemporary society. It was said: *Andar baithi lakh di, Bahar gayi kakh di* (Woman who stays at

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1. Sudarshan Singh, 'The Contribution of the Singh Sabha as a Socio-Religious Movement in Punjab', *Punjab History Conference Proceedings* (Thirty-fifth Session), March 2003, p. 343.

home is worth a *lakh* and who wanders out of her house is worth a straw). Again, *traī kam Kharab, mard nun chakki, sandhe nun gah, run nun rah*, (three things are bad, grinding for a man, threshing for a male buffalo, and travelling for a woman).²

The *purda* system was denounced even in the Sikh scriptures. The Sikh Gurus had preached against it, but with passing of time it had crept into the Sikh society under the influence of the Hindus and the Muslims. Let it be noticed that this custom was not observed by the low-caste Sikh women, because they had to assist men in their economic pursuits. But the *purda* system was so ingrained among the high and the middle class Sikh women that if they at any time went out of their four walls, they were condemned and did not enjoy due respect even in their own community.³

Giani Ditt Singh, a man of indomitable spirit, was the first man to start a vigorous propaganda against the *purda* system. He brought home to the Sikhs that women had a vital role to play in building their socio-cultural life healthy and wholesome.⁴ He declared that all efforts with regard to the emancipation of women would be meaningless, without the removal of this vice i.e. the *purda*. The reformers in the Singh Sabha emphasized complete equality of sex and advocated the same kind of baptism for men as well as women, as had been advocated by the Sikh Gurus as well as Sikh religion.⁵

In spite of the strong sentiments prevailing in favour of the *purda*, a good number of Sikh women played a significant role in the social activities of the *Singh Sabha*. For instance, *Bibi Harnam Kaur*, wife of *Bhai Takhat Singh* of Ferozepur, was an active member of the *Singh Sabha* branch of Ferozepur. She did commendable work in the field of female education. *Bibi Ripudaman Kaur*, wife of Professor *Puran Singh* and *Bibi Nand Kaur*, wife of *Babu Teja Singh Bhasaur*, were also active social workers who did commendable work in the field of social reform movement started by this organization. As a result of the work and efforts of these women,⁶ the *Singh Sabha* prohibited the use of *purda*. This way the old institution got heavy jolt; now the Sikh women came out in open and began to do work with men in the field of social reforms.⁷

2. *District Gazetteer of Multan*, 1901-02, p. 98. (This was also a common saying with the ruralites in other districts).

3. G.S. Dhillon, *Character and Impact of the Singh Sabha Movement on the History of the Punjab*, (Ph.D. Thesis), Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972, p. 169.

4. *Khalsa Akhbar*, Lahore, January 3, 1896.

5. G.S. Dhillon, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *The Khalsa Advocate*, Amritsar, 29 April, 1905.

In their bid to raise the status of women, the *Singh Sabha* reformers also tried to mitigate the evil practice of female infanticide among the Sikhs.⁸ The female infanticide was a practice of killing girls at their very birth. It was prevalent in most parts of northern India, and in the Punjab it prevailed among the *Rajputs* of the hills and the *Khatris* in the region of Gujranwala, Multan, Jhang, Shahpur, Jhelum and Lahore. The *Bedis* almost in the whole of the Punjab practiced it on a large scale.⁹ They never allowed a single female child to survive or live.¹⁰ Though the female infanticide was practiced secretly, it was not considered illegal or criminal either by the state or the society. So it continued unchecked. It was believed that in 1846-47 there were about two thousand *Bedi* families in Jullundur *Doab* area and fifteen hundred in Dera Baba Nanak region which did not have a single girl alive. In other words in these families newly born female babies were killed soon after their birth.¹¹ There were various methods which were followed to kill the girls.¹² The *Singh Sabha* reformers studied the causes, which were responsible for this inhuman and heinous practice (ill). They dissuaded the *Sodhis* and *Bedis* from indulging in this evil practice and emphasized on the equality of sexes. As a consequence of the earnest efforts made by the *Singh Sabha* reformers, the custom of female infanticide largely disappeared in the Sikh community, by the beginning of the twentieth century.¹³

Child marriage was another evil prevalent at that time; it also reduced the status of women in the society. The practice of child marriage was also practiced to some extent in the Sikh community.¹⁴ The marriage of children had been considered as the foremost duty of their parents. Though there was no fixed age for the marriage of a child, yet majority of the girls were married even before the age of puberty (generally at the age of six and seven) under all

8. G.S. Dhillon, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

9. Bhagat Singh, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh and His Times*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 321.

10. R. Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. I, London, 1883, p. 206.

11. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 322; R.R. Sethi, *John Lawrence as Commissioner of the Jullundur Doab (1846-49)*, pp. 29-31.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 323; Manmohan Kaur, *Role of Women in the Freedom Movement (1857-1947)*, Delhi, 1968, pp. 8-9; *District Gazetteer of Jullundur*, 1904, p.60; *District Gazetteer of Hoshiarpur*, 1904, p.36.

13. G.S. Dhillon, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

14. Sudarshan Singh, "The Position of Punjab Women—Social Beliefs and Practices (1849-1925)", *Punjab History Conference, Proceedings (Thirty-Fourth Session)*, March 2002, p. 279.

circumstances not beyond the age of eleven,¹⁵ leaving no opportunity for their physical and mental development. They were deprived of the joys of childhood.¹⁶ The leaders of the *Singh Sabha* preached against the child marriage particularly of girls and as a result but gradually this practice began to lose its credibility and importance.

Another evil practice prevalent at that time was polygamy. It had brought down the status of women in the society. In the aristocratic Sikh families polygamy was widely practiced. The system of polygamy was responsible not only for lowering the position of women, rather it resulted in unrest in the family life. The constant threat of another marriage discouraged the wife from asserting her rights. The women were condemned to a life of torture and insults. The *Singh Sabha* reformers appealed to the Sikh intelligentsia to come forward and set an example, by marrying not more than once. These reformers continued agitating against this evil practice of polygamy and their preachings left impact to such an extent that the public opinion began to change in this regard. Soon, polygamy was restricted and society welcomed this change without any grudge and opposition.¹⁷

Singh Sabha leaders also attempted to improve the condition of widows. They pleaded that the widows should be allowed to re-marry, if they chose to remarry; they should not be condemned, rather be encouraged. Thus, it also goes to the credit of this organization that in the Sikh community the evil of not permitting the widow remarriage disappeared.¹⁸

Singh Sabha also dealt with the dowry system which was prevalent in the society. Though this aspect was taken up by the *Singh Sabha* in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, yet it is to be noticed that the success of the *Singh Sabha* in other reforms encouraged its leaders to take up the dowry question which was an evil that was to be eliminated in the society. Thus, the dowry system which was a great evil in the society was also gradually done away with. The *Singh Sabha* leaders condemned the dowry system due to which the girls were considered to be an economic burden on the family. They made a strong plea to curtail extravagant expenditure on marriage ceremonies.¹⁹

15. Bhagat Singh, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

16. G.S. Dhillon, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176 (However, these customs continued to prevail in the Sikh society until laws were passed, prohibiting these evils).

18. *Ibid.*

19. *The Khalsa Advocate*, 15 July, 1904, p. 6.

One of the most important objectives of the *Singh Sabha*, was the spread of education as per the tenets of members of the Sikh faith.²⁰ Khem Singh Bedi's (one of the founders of the *Singh Sabha* movement), important contribution was his efforts to spread the education among the Sikh masses, especially women.²¹ Earlier the Sikh students used to get education in Hindu temples, mosques or Christian schools.²² In 1854, the Wood dispatch of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, which initiated a new era in Indian education, was received at Lahore. The following year the Punjab Government established the Department of Public Instruction and planned to open thirty single teacher primary schools in each district. Baba Khem Singh lent his full support to the scheme.²³ Baba Khem Singh Bedi started the work of establishing the schools for the teaching of *Gurmukhi*. The establishment of schools to teach *Gurmukhi* helped the Sikhs in getting education according to the norms of their faith. The Khalsa College was established at Amritsar in 1892 A.D. Gradually a network of Khalsa schools and colleges was laid in various places of Punjab.²⁴ *Bhai* Takhat Singh, a leader of the Ferozepur *Singh Sabha* was another pioneer of women's education. He was a protagonist of female education and social reforms in that region particularly. He spent whole of his life for the cause of women education. In 1892,²⁵ he founded the Sikh *Kanya Mahavidyala* at Ferozepur.²⁶ In founding and running this institution, *Bhai* Takhat Singh received great support from his wife, Harnam kaur.²⁷ Thus, doubtlessly the work done by *Singh Sabha* reformers for women education and emancipation was the marvellous achievement as well as contribution of the *Singh Sabha* organizational Movement.²⁸

20. Sudarshan Singh, *op.cit.*, March 2003, p. 344 (The most important aspects of the Singh Sabha Movement were educational and literary—Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. IV, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1998, p. 211).

21. Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Vol. II, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2001, pp. 497-498.

22. Sudarshan Singh, *op.cit.*, March 2003, p. 344.

23. Harbans Singh, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 498.

24. Sudarshan Singh, *op.cit.*, March 2003, p. 344 (Out of his immense wealth he gave away liberally for this purpose and at least fifty schools for boys and girls were opened in the Punjab through his help—Harbans Singh, *op.cit.*, Vol. II, p. 498).

25. Ganda Singh, *The Singh Sabha and other Socio-Religious Movements in the Punjab (1850-1925)*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1997, p. 288.

26. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *The Sikh Reference Book*, Edmonton, Canada, 1997, p. 628.

27. Harbans Singh, *op. cit.*, Vol. IV, p. 302.

28. *Masik Singh Sabha Patirka*, Regd. P/AR-4, Nov.-Dec. 1973, p. 88.

Hence, the *Singh Sabha* Movement did commendable work for the betterment of the women and also in various walks of life of the society. In the end we may conclude that the *Singh Sabha* movement worked in such a way that the identity of the Sikhs could be maintained. The process of the decline of Sikhism was stopped by its efforts and the reforms it introduced in different walks of life of the Sikh society. Let it be noted that this organisation and the movement carried out the work of transformation especially for the betterment of women lot. The evils which had crept in the Sikh society and Sikhism were eradicated and Sikhism started flourishing day by day. It goes to the credit of the *Singh Sabha* that the work of the emancipation of women in particular and the Sikh community in general could be achieved to the satisfaction of its leaders, particularly its founders. Thus Sikhism survived.

WORLD WAR-II DIPLOMACY—PUNJAB POLITICS AND RECRUITMENT OF SIKHS (1939-1941)

*Rekha Sood Handa**

Provincial elections were held in 1937. The unionist party by getting 96 out of 175 seats in the Punjab legislative assembly, secured the majority. The Congress obtained 18 seats. Among the Sikhs the Khalsa National Party secured 14, the Akalis 10 and the Congressite Sikhs 5. With the absolute majority of the Unionist Party in the Punjab Legislative Assembly, Sikander Hayat Khan formed the ministry in Punjab. Sunder Singh Majithia, the leader of Khalsa National Party, joined the new ministry.¹ While the KNP was lulled to sleep in the lap of unionists, the Akali Dal joined Congress at this time in order to use the Congress Party machinery for its own purposes.² The Akalis led by Sampuran Singh joined the Congress as an opposition party in the council. However, the Akalis had retained their liberty in all religious and social matters affecting their community.³ The Congress, in order to strengthen the nationalist forces welcomed the Akalis. Unlike the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League, the Akali Party was not labeled as a communal organization by the Congress.⁴ So far as Muslims of the province were concerned, their most powerful leader was Sikander not Jinnah,⁵ but his ascendancy, was to be short lived, as the second World War brought with it a completely new chapter in the history of Punjab.⁶

Second World War was started on September I, 1939 and on September 3, 1939 Great Britain declared war on Nazi Germany.⁷ Political events in India and in the Punjab began to move with a rapid pace when India was declared a belligerent country by the British Government.⁸ Lord Linlithgow's

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1. *The Tribune*, 3 March 1937.
2. Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab*, Princeton, 1966, p. 79.
3. *The Tribune*, 22 February 1937.
4. File No. 18/10/1937, Home Political, NAI.
5. Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj, 1849-1947*, Delhi, 1988, p. 132.
6. *Ibid.*
7. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II, 1839-1988, New Delhi, p. 239.
8. Baldev Raj Nayar, *ibid.*, pp. 80,90.

declaration that 'India at War' was a challenge to Congress.⁹ The Indian nationalist leaders were indignant at the declaration being made without any consultation with them, and the provincial ministries headed by the Congress party resigned from the office in protest. Since the nationalist leaders and the British Government could not reach any agreement whereby the Indian leaders could play an honourable part in the war effort, the Congress Party decided to pursue a policy of non cooperation with the British Government.¹⁰ The KNP Sikhs pressed the government for the protection of their interests in return for their military services during the war. The Shiromani Akali Dal viewed the international crisis with deep concern. Sir Sikander Hayat Khan pledged Punjab's unconditional support to the Britain in the event of war. He said, "When we offered our hand in the war we were still on political apprenticeship. It is offered again by Punjab which has attained political maturity."¹¹ On the contrary Shiromani Akali Dal reaction in an all parties conference of the Sikhs, 1st October 1939 was that the Sikhs being martial people, got an opportunity to impress upon the government for the protection of their interests in return of their services during the war. It increased the bargaining tendency of the Sikhs. The unionist Ministry was loyally serving the British. In November 1939, Sikander Hayat Khan moved another resolution in assembly declaring people's determination to resist aggression and protect the security and honour of Punjab and India. Unlike the Congress or Muslim League, the Unionist Party, unconditionally supported the war effort. At the same time he asked for an assurance that the constitutional position would be reconsidered after the war for giving India a dominion status with effective protection for minorities. The resolution carried 104 votes to 39.¹² He was joined in his expression of loyalty by Sardar Ujjal Singh, a prominent Sikh of the time. The Chief Khalsa Diwan promptly offered unconditional support to the government for the protection of their interests in return of their services during the war. The Chief Khalsa Diwan wanted the government to guarantee that, "in future any forward steps that may be taken in granting reforms to the country, their (Sikhs) separate entity as an important minority community be recognized by government and their rights, privileges, culture and religious liberty be fully safeguarded."¹³ Loyalist Sikh leaders who were basically men with letters

9. *Harijan*, September, 1939.

10. Baldev Raj Nayar, *op.cit.*, p. 80.

11. *Harijan*, Sept. 1939.

12. K.C. Gulati, *The Akali-Past and Present*, Delhi, 1974, p. 79.

13. Resolution of Chief Khalsa Diwan in Sunder Singh Majithia Papers, NMMI; *The Tribune*, October 2, 1939.

and riches viz. Sir Jogender Singh, Sardar Bahadur Ranjit Singh of New Delhi, Bishan Singh, Ex. MLA, Mrs. and Master Sujjan Singh of Sikh Missionary College and Sardar Ujjal Singh and others met the Maharaja of Patiala and appealed him to lead the *panth* at that critical hour and to impress upon the Sikh masses the desirability of joining the army in increasingly large numbers.¹⁴ Therefore the Sikh leaders established the Khalsa Defence League. The Khalsa Defence of India League affirmed that "Sikhs will stand by the British until the enemy is beaten into total submission." The signatories of the message included Sardar Baldev Singh, former minister Punjab, Kartar Singh Diwana, Ranjit Singh and Makhan.¹⁵ With the positive response of Maharaja, Sikh leaders convened an all parties Sikh Conference at Lahore on 20th January, 1941.

British diplomacy during war efforts can be seen in private fortnightly letters. In a letter of Craik to Linlithgow shows how they were manipulating the politics for Sikh recruitment to join War Advisory Council. The name of Sardar Bahadur Ujjal Singh, one of parliamentary secretary was to persuade Master Tara Singh to join war council. But later on his name was withdrawn as Ujjal Singh, though intelligent and loyal, would be regarded as merely Sir Sunder Singh's under study and would have no influence with Akalis.¹⁶ The war dominated the life of province in all its aspects. The Punjab even surpassed its herculean efforts of 1914-18 in raising army recruits and food supplies for the embattled British Empire. But how it became possible? At this time Shiromani Akali Dal viewed the international crisis with deep concern.¹⁷ Akalis being the allies of Congress and dissatisfied with the Government not withstanding with Sikhs after their support in First World War and put them under a permanent rule of the Muslims.¹⁸ While Congress and Akali Dal were atuned to press British Government to the declared war aims. But keeping in view of the interests of minority community, the Akalis did not want to boycott the war efforts like the Congress. Master Tara Singh's rationale was that if Sikh recruitment to the army suffered at this time, the future political influence of Sikh community would decrease.¹⁹ This is how the community was becoming

14. K.C. Gulati, *op.cit*, p. 80.

15. Home Deptt. Pol, G.O.I., 13/33/40.

16. Craik to Linlithgow (Telegram), 9th August, 1940; *Punjab Politics, 1940-43: Strains of War*, Lionel Carter: p. 170

17. A Pamphlet, *Sikhs and the war*, in Jawahar Lal Nehru papers, NMML.

18. *Ibid*.

19. Giani Gurbachan Singh, *Ankhi Soorma: Jiwan Master Tara Singh Ji* [The Life of Master Tara Singh], pp. 136-37.

an abridging formula where Akali and Khalsa National Party were coming closer. Some biographer of Master Tara Singh wrote that if "in the intoxication of nationalism," he had boycotted Sikh recruitment to the army then "...the Sikh position today would have been nil."²⁰ In October 1939 Master Tara Singh met the British Viceroy of India then resigned from the Congress party and became an active member of Khalsa Defence of India League. Following the example of the Sikhs, Hindu aristocratic leaders who had left Unionist party to show their resentment against Sikander-Jinnah pact, met together. British government was well aware of the communist; anti war propaganda in the villages of central Punjab.²¹ Sikhs in collectively were thinking seriously about the problem of recruitment which was having economic and political importance for the Sikhs as a minority community. The incident in 1940—refusal of Sikh squad of Central India Horse to embark at Bombay for the middle East had caused quite a flutter at the Army Headquarters and there had been a talk of disbanding of all Sikh units and stopping further recruitment.²²

The Punjab Govt. was opposed to such a drastic step and favoured a conciliatory approach.²³ At the instance of Major Billy Short, a British Army Officer, who was great admirer of the Sikhs, an inquiry was ordered into the causes of Sikh unrest in certain army units, and in principal Sikh districts. Sardar Ujjal Singh who was a Parliamentary Secretary provided a detailed account of recruitment in Lahore area which was as follow :

Total demand for March	-	484 Jat Sikhs
		656 Other Sikhs
		<u>Total 1030</u>
The actual recruitment on	-	62 Jats
10th of March was		62 Other Sikhs
		<u>Total 129</u>

While explaining this poor show in recruitment Ujjal Singh told Craik that the moderate Sikhs (by which he meant Sikhs of Khalsa National Party) distrusted that league, because they considered that it was too much in the hands of the Akalis, who supplied the paid propagandists and controlled the disbursement of funds supplied by Patiala. It was stated : "Although there are a certain number of moderate Sikhs in the League executive, including President,

20. *Ibid.*, p.129.

21. Talbot, *op.cit.*, p.131.

22. Gulati, *op.cit.*, p.81.

23. *Ibid.*

these are mere figure heads.”²⁴ Major Short was posted at Lahore as a liaison officer. A few other like-minded officers were posted in the main areas of Sikh recruitment, “to stimulate efforts by the civil and military authorities to allay Sikh disquiet and induce among the Sikhs a healthier attitude towards the war and recruitment.”²⁵ While the process of war recruitment was going on, Jinnah was making every effort to strengthen the position of the Muslims. Unionist Party was already increasing strength in Punjab which was considered a device to strengthen the Muslim positions in the province.²⁶ The growing strength of the Muslims in the country and in Punjab certainly upset the Sikhs. Sikh leadership was equally disturbed as they feared that Sikhs would lose their favoured positions in the army. Historically we see the British reduced the Sikh strength in the army from 20% to 13% after the Akali Movement (1920-25) inspite of the fact that out of 20 million crosses won by India, 15 came to the Sikhs.²⁷ It is a matter of interest that a nationalist party, i.e the Akalis was coming closer to British government, but why?

The year 1940 was marked by Individual Satyagraha Movement. It was a technique to carry on war against imperialism in a peculiar situation. The Congress started it under the dynamic leadership of Gandhi. Punjab did not give a bad account of itself in two movements. *Satyagrahis* were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment during this period. The Akalis also participated in two movements. About 362 *satyagrahis* were arrested and convicted under rule 38 or D.I.R. for having made speeches before they could offer *satyagraha*. In addition to these there were 200 detainees in the Punjab jails. The fine imposed on *satyagrahis* amounted to Rs. 82,62510 out of which Rs. 7,287,20 could be realized.²⁸

In May 1940, Nehru visited Lahore. He opposed to India helping Britain in the war. At the same time he was against taking advantage of critical position in which the British found themselves in context to war against Fascism in Europe.²⁹ The Communist wave in Lahore was in torrents. At the same time Muslim League's organizational wing was strengthened, funds collected and branches were opened in almost all the districts and even in some tehsils while Sikhs were indulged in internal politics and Congress also facilitated League's

24. Lionel Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

25. Gulati, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

26. Gopal Singh, *A History of the Sikh People*, World Book Centre, 1979, p. 684.

27. Master Tara Singh, pp. 129-130.

28. *The Tribune*, Jan. 14, 1941.

29. Home Political, File No. 18/5/39, NMML, New Delhi.

moves by resigning from the ministries in seven provinces. The Muslim League was strengthened and a resolution for a separate Muslim State, popularly known as Pakistan resolution was passed in March 1940. This was taken as a threat to the existence of the Sikhs in Punjab and it was denounced by the Hindus, Sikhs and Unionists. Large number of meetings were organized to condemn Pakistan scheme severely. The Sikh Community representatives, Khalsa National Party and Akali Dal were vocal. Sir Jogender Singh, Sardar B. Ujjal Singh and Sunder Singh Majithia resolved that Sikhs would never tolerate for a single day rapid communal rule of any community in Punjab which was not only their homeland, but 'holy land'.³⁰ Master Tara Singh, President of Shiromani Akali Dal declared that if the Muslims tried to establish their rule, they would have to cross an ocean of blood.³¹ The uneasiness created by this political move compelled Sikhs to forget mutual conflicts. The Sikh community was united to retain their homeland at any cost. Responding Pakistan resolution on 11th March, 1941, Sikander said, "If that is what Pakistan means, I have nothing to do with it. Let us join hands in order to preserve and maintain peace and harmony within the province and unite with the rest of India to face with courage and confidence the danger from without..... Hands of the Punjab." Sikander was determined and could afford to oppose Jinnah's interference in the Punjab affairs now. Political environment in Punjab was changing as a few Akalis were satisfied with Sikander's role. In the mean time in March 1941, a deputation of the Khalsa Defence League met Craik. Craik repeated to Linlithgow, "I think that the Defence League members are genuine enough in their professions. Akalis' influences are stronger in League than they should be, but even the Akalis have come to realize that a deadline in the Sikh Military quota must result in a serious setback to the community and it is obvious that any Sikh aspiring to the position of a leader may land himself in difficulties, if he preaches non-co-operation with Government in the war." At times British Indian Government encouraged Khalsa Defence League war activities. Akalis did not like the idea of extension of League by a larger proportion of the Khalsa National Party as they were aspired to the role of controlling the policy of the Sikh community.

Sikh visitors were complaining that they were then under the heel of a hostile Muslim Raj.³² They wanted their due show in the government of the

30. *The Indian Annual Register*, 1940, Vol. 1, p. 357

31. *The Tribune*, April 18, 1940.

32. Lionel Carter, *Craik to Linlithgow*, 2nd April, 1941, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

Punjab. The events were so that in June 1941 Linlithgow in the cabinet decided to prepare a National Defence Council. Two other representatives on the Defence Council were to be proposed. A (Punjab's) team was taken as appropriate which would be having representatives of Hindus and Sikhs as well as Muslims. As it was justified by Glancy that all three representatives had to be persons who had won popular approval in the relations and who had proved that they could work together amicably and effectively. Glancy suggested two ideas to include two names, one for the Hindu and one Sikh representatives—Sir Chottu Ram's and Sardar Dasaunda Singh's names to be included. Besides, he suggested, which became the part of British diplomacy and much talked about in the private papers—were the names of Hindus, Sikhs, Muslim :

- a) Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims—Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das M.C.S., or his son Rai Bahadur Lala Gopal Das, M.L.A.; Rai Bahadur Lala Sohan Singh, M.L.A. (Chairman, Lahore Electric Supply Co.).
- b) Sikhs—S.B. Ujjal Singh, M.L.A., and Sardar Naunihal Singh, M.L.A.—supporters of the unionist government and disappointed candidates for the post of Sikh member of the cabinet. Of the two Ujjal Singh has made himself more prominent politically but Navnihal Singh is, I should say distinctly more attractive. Baldev Singh—Akali sympathiser, a wealthy industrialist (Tata Nagar). If he should be selected, it would be explained for the benefit of the Khalsa Nationalist Party.³³ But when Sikander Hayat Khan was asked to give names he got a new list of three communities' nominations. For Sikhs the names appeared as :

- 1) Sardar Sir Jogendra Singh,
- 2) Sardar Baldev Singh, M.L.A.
- 3) Master Tara Singh, President, S.G.P.C.
- 4) Lieut. Sardar Navnihal Singh Man, M.L.A.

After a pondering discussion the right choice for them was Sardar Navnihal Singh. As Sikander was not in favour of Sir Joginder Singh whom he regarded as an unpractical and superficial idealist, he writes that Sir Joginder

33. B.J. Glancy to Lord Linlithgow, *Secret and Personal D.C. No. 350*, June 26th, 1941.

Singh would be more of nuisance than a help to the Council, and certainly doubts whether he would be of any practical assistance.³⁴

Though he was soundly pleasant enough but did not command any influence worth the name among the Sikhs. Ujjal Singh and Tara Singh also lost the case being Arora Sikhs who could not promote the recruitment among Jat Sikhs. About Baldev Singh, they opined that he had no direct contact with the Sikhs of the Punjab because he lived in Tata Nagar. Sikander was also doubtful whether being a contractor his appointment would be appropriate or not.

Sikander was coming close to the Akalis because of the favourable effect it would have on army recruitment. The Akalis, because they hated and feared the prospect of Pakistan, sans co-operation with the unionists and the war effort as the best defence against it. Their close links with the Congress had first led them to adopt an attitude of non-co-operation towards the war. However they soon realized that the maintenance of Sikh connection with the army was vital for the presentation of the Sikhs as a separate entity.³⁵ Although they did not openly support the Khalsa Defence of India League which was formed in January 1941³⁶ to promote Sikh army recruitment, they nevertheless promised to secretly help in propaganda works in the villages in its favour.³⁷

It is quite evident from the above study that the history of the two years 1939-41, was very crucial as world war-II resulted in changing the total political scenario of the province. It fastened the political activities within the various political parties of the province Congress, the Muslim League and Mahasabha, etc. on one hand and war diplomacy of the British Government in India on the other. The so called nationalists like the Akalis became loyalist and showed their full devotion to the government by helping the government in war recruitment. The Akalis and the Unionist Party came closer.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 258.

35. Ian Talbot, *op. cit.*

36. *Op. cit.*, p.150.

37. Craik to Linlithgow, 22 November 1941, *Linlithgow Papers*, File 90, IOR; also see, Talbot, *op.cit.*

ROLE OF SHAHEED SUKHDEV THAPAR IN THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT

*Sandeep Singh**

The Indian sub-continent, the great landmass of South Asia, is the home of one of the world's oldest and most influential civilizations.¹ The Indian National Movement was undoubtedly one of the biggest mass movements modern society has ever seen.² But tragically enough, the birth of a free nation was accompanied by its simultaneous break up too. The result was tragic bloodbath. History will never forget that the Indian State was born out of the pyres of one of the biggest communal holocausts in recorded history.³ From the point of the changes made in its objectives, methods and leadership, the history of the Indian National Movement can be divided into three distinct phases :

- (i) The Moderate
- (ii) The Extremist
- (iii) The Gandhian.

Punjab was the last province of India which was annexed by the Britishers. The annexation of the Punjab in 1849 by the British put an end to the independence of the land of five rivers. From the very beginning the British Government adopted a policy of coercion and repression and tried to establish the rule with a strong hand.⁴ In the Punjab, the flame of freedom struggle was ignited in 1860's by the Kukas or the Namdhari sect who made use of non-violent methods for the first time like 'boycott' along with armed struggle.

Prominent extremist leaders who believed in extremism were Bhagat Singh, Kartar Singh Sarabha, Sukhdev Singh Thapar, Lala Lajpat Rai and

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1. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 9, Chicago edition, 1978.
2. Bipin Chandra (ed.), *India's Struggle for Independence (1857-1947)*, Delhi, 1988.
3. Parkash Chandra, *History of the Indian National Movement*.
4. *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XX—II, October, 1986, p. 312; S.C. Mittal, *The Roots of Nationalism in Punjab (1858-1900)*.

Udham Singh who were born in Punjab. In spite of their basically different methods, they enriched and strengthened the struggle for national independence.⁵ Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev gained prominence due to their revolutionary outlook and actions. Not only did they enrich and widen the ideology of the revolutionary movement but also gave a new meaning and dimension to its mode of struggle. Shaheed Sukhdev was a grand personality, we know Bhagat Singh because his writings are in front of us. But it is very important to understand that Shaheed Sukhdev played an important role in developing the thoughts and politeness of Bhagat Singh.⁶ Sukhdev was born in the *Chaura Bazar* area called *Nau Ghara*⁷ in Ludhiana. His father Sh. Ram Lal used to run a shop namely M/s Lala Chint Ram Thapar with his cousin at Layalpur.⁸ At that time their business was running well and the whole family was called in Layalpur. Lala Ram Lal died in 1910. Lala Chint Ram brought up Sukhdev with much care and affection and never let him feel the loss of his father. Lala Chint Ram was a freedom fighter, Sukhdev adored him for this.⁹ He was an Arya Samaji. He was a humanitarian, crazy about hardwork and offender of racialism who made people aware about it. It was the patriotism of that time and Lala Chint Ram was a living example of it. The year 1907 was known as '*Pagri Sambhal Jatta*'¹⁰ year due to Peasant Agitation. Patriots like Ajit Singh¹¹ and Lala Lajpat Rai had criticized the agrarian policy of Britishers and carried out awareness in common people. Lala Ram Lal looked after the shop and Lala Chint Ram looked after the '*Pagri Sambhal*' movement. Due to his active participation in freedom movement, Lala Chint Ram became famous as '*Sher-i-Layalpur*' (Lion of Layalpur).¹² The friendship of elders made friendship between the children Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev also. Child Bhagat Singh had come to Layalpur with his uncle while Ajit Singh and Chint Ram discussed social issues; the children had played together.

5. *Proceeding's, Punjab History Conference* (April 26-27, 1975), Punjabi University Patiala, p. 221.

5. *Daily Ajit*, 14th May, 2007 (Punjabi Newspaper).

7. Nine Houses.

8. Mathra Dass Thapar – *Jeevan Gatha – Amar Shaheed Sukhdev*, Chandigarh, 1998 (Punjabi Language).

9. Manmath Nath Gupta, *Bhagat Singh and His Times*, Delhi, 1977, p. 118.

10. Means—Peasant, guard your Turban.

11. Uncle of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh.

12. Khushwant Bargari (ed. and Trans.), *Shaheed Sukhdev : Krantikari Sangharsh da Sutterdhar*, Faridkot, 2007.

Sukhdev was a man of firm decision. In Sanathan Dharam School he had a great interest in studies.¹³ He had known the fact that education enables a person to think, develops his thoughts and makes him stronger.¹⁴ When his uncle stopped sending his son (Jaidev) to school who was weak in studies and did not remit his fee, Sukhdev picked some money from the shop, deposited his cousin's fee and sent him to school again.

After passing matric from Sanathan Dharam School Layalpur in 1922, Sukhdev got admission in National College Lahore. After one year, Bhagat Singh also got admission. Both became fast friends because of same views. Prof. Jai Chandra Vidyalankar taught history to Sukhdev and Bhagat Singh. Both became freedom fighters due to his inspiration. As compared to Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev had little interest in reading books, during college days. He joined the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. In March 1926, Bhagat Singh founded the Naujawan Bharat Sabha at Lahore to infuse the revolutionary ideas among the youth. The Sabha was organized by the collective efforts of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Bhagwati Charn Vohra, Comrade Ramkrishan and Comrade Ram Chander.¹⁵ They had planned to establish a network of the Sabhas at tehsil, district and provincial levels. If Bhagat Singh and Bhagwati Charn Vohra were its initiators then the difficult responsibility of groupism was handled by Sukhdev and Comrade Ram Chandra. Sukhdev tried many effective ways to drag the youth out of narrow thinking. There would be common meals for everyone and everybody would eat together in the same utensils. It was the special instruction by Sukhdev that the human narrow mindedness should be eradicated only through this way; till a youth does not learn to have firmness in his thoughts he can not do anything in his life.¹⁶ The collaboration of Sukhdev and Comrade Ramchandra got success. The Naujawan Bharat Sabha progressed within days. It succeeded in establishing its branches not only in the Punjab but also inspired the growth of the Youth Sabha in Bombay, Bengal, Central provinces and Rajputana.¹⁷ In 1925 all the important leaders of Hindustan Republican Association were arrested in Kakori Conspiracy case. So the union and collaboration of

13. *Daily Ajit*, 14th May, 2007 (Punjabi Newspaper).

14. Mathra Das Thapar, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

15. Kamlesh Mohan, *Militant Nationalism in the Punjab - 1919-1935*, New Delhi, 1985, p. 80.

16. Mathra Das Thapar, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

17. Kamlesh Mohan, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

revolutionary party from a new beginning was now the responsibility of Bhagat Singh, Chander Shekher Azad and Sukhdev. After the murder of Saunders Sukhdev successfully sent Bhagat Singh with Durga Bhabhi and her three year old child to Calcutta by performing his organizational skill.

By nature Sukhdev was outspoken and independent.¹⁸ As compared to Bhagat Singh, Shiv Verma says, "It seemed to me that Sukhdev was greater organiser. He was a man who gave thought to detail, whereas Bhagat Singh was a man of vision ignoring small things."¹⁹

Intensive bomb-making became the sole mode of revolutionary activity during the short interval between the Saunders murder and the Assembly bomb outrage. Plan of manufacturing bombs on a small scale took practical shape when Bhagat Singh came into contact with Jatindernath Das in Calcutta.²⁰ Among other persons Sukhdev also learnt the process and techniques of bomb-making. Sukhdev got bombshells made at Lahore and these were filled with explosive material, prepared at Agra. The quarters in Kashmir Building, which Bhagwati Charan rented on 16 March, 1929, were actually used as a bomb factory. Sukhdev was the principal organiser of the bomb factory. Sukhdev and Kishori Lal visited several carpenters and moulders for getting cast iron-bombshells and plugs made. Ghulam Rasul, under the supervision of Jalal-ud-Din, Proprietor of the foundry works at Brandreth Road Lahore, prepared plugs and screw threads for Sukhdev.²¹

The meeting of H.S.R.A. at Agra decided the Central Assembly bomb action. Sukhdev was not present in the meeting in which the central committee supported the opinion of the party that not Bhagat Singh but two other youngmen should lead in Assembly bomb action. When Sukhdev came to know about the scheme he opposed it. His stand was that after arrest only Bhagat Singh can successfully pilot the scheme of advocating the new ideology of the party in the court room. He argued with Bhagat Singh on this aspect. At the instance of Bhagat Singh a meeting of the central committee was convened and the question was reopened. Sukhdev did not speak a word. The committee had to bow before Bhagat Singh's will and had to change its decision. Sukhdev without informing anybody, went to Lahore, next day with his eyes heavy and red. It appeared that he had been

18. Manmath Nath Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

21. Kamlesh Mohan, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

weeping bitterly. But on that day he neither wept nor showed any sign of weakness, though he was very much disturbed internally. He had sacrificed the dearest thing for the cause.²²

After the Assembly Bomb action, on 15th April, 1929, the raiding party, headed by Khan Bahadur Abdul Aziz, Superintendent of Police, Montgomery searched and arrested Jai Gopal, Sukhdev and Kishori Lal.

The Lahore conspiracy case opened on 10th July, 1929 in the special magistrate's court which held the trial in the Central Jail, Lahore. Thus the case started with 16 accused.

(i) Sukhdev (ii) Kishori Lal (iii) Shiv Verma (iv) Gaya Prasad (v) Jatin Das (vi) Jaidev Kapoor (vii) Bhagat Singh (viii) B.K. Dutt (ix) Kamal Nath Tiwari (x) Mahavir Singh (xi) Surendra (xii) Des Raj (xiii) Prem Dutt (xiv) Ashara (xv) Jitendranath (xvi) Ajey Ghosh.²³

Sukhdev was the organizer of revolutionary party in Punjab. That is why the conspiracy case constituted by British Government was waging war against King George and it was Crown versus Sukhdev.

Bhagat Singh formed a Tribunal consisting of Sukhdev, Bijey Kumar Sinha and himself in order to plan their strategy and improve the means of continuing their struggle in the jails and in the courts.²⁴ Sukhdev participated in prison hunger strike in 1929 to protest against the inhuman treatment meted out to the inmates. At last the judgement was delivered on the 7th October, 1930. Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev were sentenced to death. They were hanged in Lahore Jail on 23rd March, 1931.

The importance of Sukhdev as Extremist Nationalist is evident from the fact that although he did not actually participated in the murder of Saunders, but he was sentenced to death for organizing the murder. Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev had endless love for each other. Bhagat Singh always used to say that whatever titles he had got they were only due to the sacrifices and boldness of his friends and Sukhdev has a special place in it.²⁵

22. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

23. Manmath Nath Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

25. Mathra Das Thapar, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

ADVENT OF POPULAR GOVERNMENT IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Anu Mankotia*

The modern state of Jammu and Kashmir came into being through the Treaty of Amritsar, concluded on March 16, 1846. It was the largest princely State of India and its rulers were enjoying near despotic powers like rulers of other princely States. Maharaja Gulab Singh preferred to share his power with his advisors. Thus, a large band of the courtiers enjoyed powers in his State and assisted him in his administration. Maharaja Gulab Singh was succeeded by his son, Ranbir Singh who re-organised the entire polity of the State and reorganized the whole of the administration into three departments — *Daftar-i-Nizamat*, *Daftar-i-Jangi* and *Daftar-i-Diwani*. He also codified laws on the basis of Macaulay code that is known as the *Ranbir Dand-Bidhi*. He strengthened the judiciary of the State by establishing regular courts and appointing regular judges. He did his best to make the justice cheap, speedy and visible too. After the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1885, his son Pratap Singh became the ruler of the State. At the same time British Indian government also got an opportunity to appoint a British Resident in the State. The British Resident officer along with the Maharaja improved the other departments. To meet the requirements of the administration many outsiders were appointed in the State on the basis of their knowledge.

Maharaja Pratap Singh was succeeded by his nephew, Hari Singh. Maharaja Hari Singh was influenced by Western Education, Philosophy and thought. He had a great regard for the values of liberalism, democracy, popular will etc. Soon after his coronation, he took various progressive steps to modernize the State in order to associate the popular element of the State with his government. In the absence of legislative organ the Maharaja associated prominent persons who commanded public respect. In this way, he enlarged his Council of Ministers.

Thus in the beginning of his rule, in the absence of the legislative organ in the State, the young Maharaja attempted to associate the popular

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representatives of all the communities residing in the State. However, before July 1931, there was no demand from the masses for the formation of the legislature in the State. Therefore, the Maharaja had already made an announcement for the appointment of a Grievances and Complaints commission, to examine the grievances of the different communities residing in the State. Bertrend J. Glancy, a British Officer of the Government of India, who had earlier served the State, was appointed the chairman of this commission. On the same day, Maharaja ordered the setting up of the Kashmir Constitutional Reform Conference to examine the feasibility of political reforms in the State. However, Mr. Glancy was appointed its president as well.¹

The conference started its business on March 14, 1932; it had fourteen sittings and completed its work on April 7, 1932.² Therefore, in May 1932, Mr. B.J. Glancy presented to the Maharaja the recommendations of the Kashmir Constitutional Reforms Conference. In pursuance of the recommendations, Mr. Glancy recommended a Franchise Committee, which was appointed by the Maharaja to report on the quantum and content of the elected membership in the proposed assembly, for the determination of the qualifications for Franchise and the delimitation of the separate electorate. Sir Barjor Dalal, the Chief Justice of the State High Court was appointed as the Chairman of this Committee. Thus, the Franchise Committee was constituted of L.A. Jardine, a civil service official of the Government of India, who was appointed Vice President of the Committee and Franchise Officer.³

The Franchise Committee recommended the institutions of a Legislative Assembly composed of seventy five members of which thirty three were elected and forty two were to be nominated. The Committee recommended that among the nominated, the Maharaja reserved the right to appoint twelve official members to the Assembly among them six would be the ministers. According to the recommendations of the committee, the other six non-officials were to be appointed on the basis of their expert knowledge on the various spheres of legislation.⁴

1. Maharaja Hari Singh's order dated November 24, 1931 as referred by Ram Krishan Koul Bhatt in *Political and Constitutional Development in J&K*, Seema Publication, Delhi, 1984, p. 53.

2. Report of the Kashmir Constitutional Reforms Conference, State Archives Repository, p.2.

3. *Ibid.*, State Archives Repository, p. 1.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

With regard to the weightage given to the different communities, the committee recommended that twenty one Muslims should be the elected members in the assembly; the Hindus be represented by ten elected members and the Sikhs by two elected members. The nominated members were to be appointed by the Maharaja.⁵ Therefore, the Jammu Kashmir regulation No. 1 of 1931 *Samvat*, corresponding to the Constitution of 1934, came into force on April 20, 1934.⁶ The Constitution Act was passed on the recommendation made by the Constitutional Reforms Conference and the Franchise Committee. The Constitution Act envisaged the institution of a legislative body, which comprised :

- (1) The Council of Ministers,⁷ and
- (2) The Legislative Assembly (the Praja Sabha).

The Praja Sabha was to consist of seventy five members, out of which thirty three members were to be elected through separate communal electorate that included Twenty one Muslims, Ten Hindus and Two Sikhs. However, the Maharaja could nominate forty two members to the Assembly on different grounds. Among these nominated, fourteen were to be nominated for the communities or areas specified,⁸ to the Regulation. Sixteen members designated as the State Councilors were to be summoned by the Maharaja for a term of four and half years. The Ministers of the State were to be the ex-officio members. The total number of official members including the ministers was not to exceed twelve. The remaining if any, were to be filled by non-officials nominated by His Highness.⁹ The Council was given the powers to make the rules regarding the term of office and conditions of nominations of nominated members, qualifications for members of the Praja Sabha and for electors; final decisions on doubts and disputes as to the validity of an election and rules for regulating the course of business in the Praja Sabha.¹⁰

Though the State Legislature was set-up in September 1934, yet it was not a true democratic set-up. Since, the decisions of the legislature were based on majority, therefore, not all the popular members of the

5. Report of the Franchise Committee, 1933, p. 1; *Jammu and Kashmir Gazette*, Vol. 46, No. 14, dated January 20, 1934, State Archives Repository, p. 15.

6. The Jammu-Kashmir Regulation No. 1 of 1934, State Archives Repository.

7. Constitution Act, 1934, Regulation No.1, State Archives Repository.

8. *Ibid.*, Section 1 and Section 14, p. 10.

9. *Ibid.*, Section 14 and Section 17, pp. 3-4.

10. *Ibid.*, Section 15 and Section 16.

house, even put together, could pass a resolution alone because of the presence of the nominated majority in house. The nominated majority in the house seldom allowed any resolution of the popular member to be passed in the legislature. The principle of joint responsibility unknown to them and the members of the State Council could remain in the office until they enjoyed the confidence of the Maharaja. In view of all these limitations in the political system of the State, it forced the most popular and the only organized political party of the State — All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference to launch a struggle, both within the legislature and outside for the establishment of the Responsible Government in the State.

On March 29, 1936, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference met in Srinagar. The Conference appealed to the Maharaja to widen the scope of the constitutional provisions enacted in the Act of 1934 which the Committee started, had done considerable harm to the development of the representative and responsible administrative institutions in the State. The working committee of the Muslim Conference demanded transfer of effective powers to the Praja Sabha, extension of franchise and the abolition of the separate electorates.¹¹ The working committee also took a decision to organize demonstrations and protest all over the State on May 8, 1936, in support of the institution of a Responsible Legislature.¹²

Therefore, Maharaja Hari Singh on February 11, 1939, announced his decision to take further steps to enable his subjects to make orderly progress in the direction of attaining the ideal of active co-operation between the executive and the legislature of the State in ministering to the maximum happiness of his people.¹³ The main features of the constitutional advance thus sanctioned and proclaimed were that:¹⁴

- (a) The elected elements in a house of seventy five members were raised from thirty three to forty;
- (b) The sabha was given the right to electing a Deputy President from amongst its non-official members; and

11. Resolution of the Working Committee, March 29th, 1936, as referred by Bhatt Ram Krishan Koul, *Political and Constitutional Development of the Jammu and Kashmir*, Seema Publications, New Delhi, 1984, p. 82.

12. *Ibid.*

13. Proclamation of 1939, issued by Maharaja Hari Singh, State Archives Repository.

14. Jammu and Kashmir Constitution Act of 1930 (No. XIV of 1996), State Archives Repository, p. 2.

- (c) A provision was made for the appointment of the four non-official members as under secretaries to work with the Maharaja's Ministers and ensure the establishment of closer association between the government on the one side and the members of the Praja Sabha and the constituencies on the other.

The National Conference leadership sharply criticized the provision of the Constitutional Act of 1930, and alleged that the Constitution Act did not provide for any effective constitutional and administrative reforms in the State. They alleged that this Constitution Act did not underline any transfer of authority to the people, or the introduction of any measure of responsibility in the administration or the State.¹⁵ In the meantime, the National Conference evolved a programme of reforms and reconstruction for the State. The programme was entitled the "*Naya Kashmir*". In February 1944, the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference adopted it as its manifesto.¹⁶

The *Naya Kashmir* Plan envisaged an independent judiciary in the State. The judiciary was proposed to be constituted of a High Court, with people's courts at the District as well as Tehsil level. The plan proposed that the National Assembly of the State would select the judges of the High Court and the judges of the District and the Tehsil courts would be appointed by the High Court. The people's courts were to be elected by the people's *panchayats*. The High Court was to be vested with the powers to supervise and direct all judicial functions of the government.¹⁷

However, in October 1944, the ruler of the State, Maharaja Hari Singh made an announcement through which he expressed his intention to appoint two of ministers to his council from among the members of the Praja Sabha. The proclamation of the ruler provided that the Praja Sabha would elect six members from among the elected members of the Sabha and would submit the panel of the members so elected to the ruler. Consequently the ruler would appoint two ministers from the panel, one of whom would be a Muslim and other a Hindu. The two ministers would be accountable to the ruler and remain in office, so long as they enjoy the confidence of the Maharaja.¹⁸

15. Jammu and Kashmir Constitution Act, 1939, Section 6-12, State Archives Repository.

16. H. Ganjoo, *This is Kashmir*, p. 10.

17. *Naya Kashmir*, published by P.K. Bamzai, Director of Information, New Delhi, Section 24.

18. Proclamation, 1944, Jammu State Archives Repository.

Erroneously, the scheme envisaged by the proclamation came to be called *Dyarchy*. The Praja Sabha nominated two members of the house, who were responsible to the ruler and remained in office until they enjoyed the confidence of the ruler. There was no division of the council, therefore, no separate and independent spheres of powers were allocated to them. The ruler reserved the power to distribute portfolios among his ministers. The National Conference accepted the scheme of *Dyarchy*. The conference leaders maintained :

- (1) That *Dyarchy* was a half-way measure towards the Responsible Government and should; therefore, be given a trial and
- (2) That while accepting the scheme the National Conference would make it clear to the ruler that the *Dyarchy* did not satisfy the aspirations of the people.

The Muslim Conference rejected the scheme outright. The Muslim Conference charged the Government of instituting the *Dyarchy* to divide the Muslims in the State.¹⁹

On the recommendation of the Praja Sabha, Maharaja Hari Singh appointed Wazir Ganga Ram and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg as the two ministers representing the Sabha. Wazir Ganga Ram was a Hindu from Jammu, who had served the State Government in different capacities and was elected to the Sabha as an independent candidate from Reasi. Mirza Afzal Beg was the Deputy leader of the Parliamentary Party of the National Conference in the Sabha and was elected unopposed to the Praja Sabha.²⁰ The newly appointed ministers were not satisfied with the staff attached to their offices for the smooth functioning of the administration. Besides, the Prime Minister desired them to act as part of the official block, a desire that was sure to cause annoyance. Infact, these restrictions imposed on the two ministers deprived them of the right to vote on the floor of the Sabha.²¹

In the Council, these two ministers represented a distinctly outlook that could by no mean be reconciled to the policy lines the other ministers had followed. Not only were these two ministers denied initiative in the formulation of the administrative policy, they were also deprived of the technical operatives necessary for their functions. Finally, Beg offered to resign from the office. On March 19, 1946, Beg resigned from the

19. Santosh Koul – *Freedom Struggle in J&K*, p. 148.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Bhatt, Koul, *op. cit.*, p. 108.

Government and he was replaced by Mian Ahmad Yar, but tension continued in the National Conference and finally *Dyarchy* was dissolved.²²

However, in 1947 India was divided into the separate Nations, India and Pakistan and Maharaja Hari Singh, the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir could not decide his future course and, therefore, tried to conclude a Stand Still Agreement with both the Dominions. As a result of economic blockade and tribal attack from the territory of Pakistan, the ruler of the State, Maharaja Hari Singh on October 26, 1947 signed by Instrument of Accession and acceded to India and on October 30, 1947, the Maharaja appointed Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as the Prime Minister of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Maharaja appointed an Emergency Administration headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.²³ An Emergency Council constituted of twenty-three members consisting of thirteen Muslim members (twelve from valley and one from Jammu) and ten non Muslim members. The powers, the Emergency Administration supposed to exercise, were not defined. In fact, even the territorial jurisdiction of the Emergency Administration was not clearly delimited.

However, in November 1947, the Government of India advised the Maharaja to appoint an Interim Government under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah until a model of representative administrative institutions were evolved. The Maharaja was offered the option to retain Mr. Mehar Chand Mahajan as his Prime Minister. The Maharaja was assured that his Dewan could continue to remain a member of the Council of Ministers and would preside over its meeting.²⁴ The proposals made by the Government of India did not find favour with the leadership of the National Conference, which was opposed to the division of powers between the New Ministry and the Dewan, Gopaldaswami Ayangar, who was the Minister without portfolio in the Government of India, dispatched a fresh scheme to the Maharaja and the leaders in the Emergency Administration. The Scheme envisaged :

- (i) An Interim Government constituted of a Council of Ministers was set up under Constitution Act of 1939;

22. *Khidmat*, April 21, 1946, State Archives Repository, p. 173.

23. Emergency Administration Order No. 176 H of 1947, dated, October 30, 1947, State Archives Repository.

24. Durga Das, *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, p. 104; Pandit Nehru to Maharaja Hari Singh, National Archives of India.

- (ii) Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was appointed Prime Minister of the State and the other Ministers of the Council were appointed on his advice;
- (iii) The Interim Government was responsible to the Maharaja.²⁵

The Interim Government was instituted by a proclamation, which Maharaja Hari Singh issued on March 5, 1948.²⁶ The Interim Government was constituted of a Council of Ministers that was headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who was appointed the Prime Minister of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The proclamation did not refer to the arrangements that were made for the functioning of the Interim Government.²⁷ However, within days, the Interim Government ran into trouble. In April 1949, Sardar Patel, the Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of India suggested Maharaja Hari Singh to leave Jammu and Kashmir and make his son Yuvraj Karan Singh the Regent.²⁸ Accordingly, on June 9, 1949, Maharaja Hari Singh abdicated in favour of his son. Thus, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah got free hand to manage the administration of the state.

However, On May 1, 1951 Yuvraj Karan Singh issued a proclamation and ordered the institution of the Constituent Assembly for the State.²⁹ The proclamation envisaged that Assembly would be constituted of the representatives of the people elected on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise and secret ballot and general elections to the Assembly were held in September 1951,³⁰ and on November 5, 1951, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah inaugurated the Constituent Assembly of the State.

On November 7, 1951, the Constituent Assembly of the State set up a Basic Principles Committee and an Advisory Committee on fundamental rights and citizenship. The Basic Principles Committee was charged with the task of finalizing the principles on which the constitution of the State would be based.³¹ On October 20, 1953, the Basic Principles Committee and the Advisory Committee on citizenships and fundamental rights were

25. Durga Das, *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*; Gopalaswami Ayyanger to Maharaja Hari Singh, dated December 9, 1947, National Archives of India, p. 108.

26. Proclamation of Maharaja Hari Singh, dated March 5, 1948, State Archives Repository.

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, p. 268.

29. Proclamation issued by the Head of the State on May 1, 1951, State Archives Repository.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Teng, Kaul, Bhatt, p. 191.

reconstituted by a resolution of the Constituent Assembly. The Drafting committee presented its report to the Constituent Assembly on February 11, 1954. The Constituent Assembly of the State completed its work in November 1956. On November 17, 1949, the Assembly of the State adopted it finally; it was brought into force on January 26, 1957.³²

Thus, Jammu and Kashmir was the only State that had its own constitution and its own flag along with its own head of the State. But this time the Supreme Court of India, the Election Commissioner of India, the Controller and Auditor General of India and above all the Emergency Power of the President of India were not extended to the State. However, the Autocracy came to end and it was the beginning of democracy. The centre of power shifted from Jammu to Srinagar and the people of Jammu resented this shift of power and their resentment culminated in the historic agitation of Praja Parishad.

32. Jammu and Kashmir Constitution Amendment Act, 1955, Part A, Section 4, State Archives Repository.

MUSLIM LEAGUE'S AGITATION AGAINST THE COALITION MINISTRY OF SIR KHIZR HAYAT KHAN TIWANA (JANUARY-MARCH 1947)

*Amir Jahan**

In the movement for Pakistan, the elections of 1945-46 in which All India Muslim League candidates won and secured more than 75% of the Muslim votes proved to be very crucial. In most of the provinces majority ministry's governments were installed but the majority of the Muslim League in the Punjab Assembly was ignored and flouted. Instead, a coalition ministry headed by Tiwana whose unionist party secured only 20 seats in the Punjab Assembly house of 175 was installed with the support of non-Muslim members. This was not to be tolerated by the Muslim League who started agitation which succeeded as discussed in this article.

The united Punjab was one of the largest Muslim province of British India with 57% of the Muslim population. When the elections of 1946 were held the Muslim League secured 80% of the Muslim votes. The Muslim League would have been invited to form the provincial ministry but the Governor of the province asked Sir Khizr Hayat Khan, a Unionist leader, to form the Punjab Ministry on 7 March 1946.¹ As the Unionists failed to get majority of the votes, they formed the coalition Ministry with the support of the Hindu and Sikh MLAs belonging to the Congress and the Akali Dal party.²

For formation of the coalition government excluding the Muslim League, was condemned by the Communists and the Leaguers.³ This ministry was installed despite warning from the Muslim League leaders that Government will have to face grave consequences if the non-Muslim Ministry was installed in a Muslim province.

Liaquat Ali Khan, Honorary-General Secretary of the All India Muslim League in his address at a mammoth public gathering in Lahore on 6 March 1946 had issued such a warning and said that, "Nawab of Mamdot, leader of the Muslim League party, had made it perfectly clear in his interview with the Governor on

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1. N. Mansergh (ed.), *Transfer of Power*, Vol. VI, New Delhi, 1976, pp.1137-1139.

2. *Times of India*, 12 March 1946.

3. Ajeet Javed, *Left Politics in Punjab*, New Delhi, 1988, p.223.

Wednesday afternoon that he (Nawab of Mamdot) was in possession of the signatures of 88 (73+5 Independent + 10 others) members of the Punjab Assembly, including the non-Muslims who formed majority in the House and in such circumstances the Muslim League party was in position to form a ministry".⁴ The election results of the Punjab Legislative Assembly were as follows:⁵

Congress	:	51
Muslim League	:	73
Unionists	:	20
Akalis	:	22
Independent	:	09
Total	:	175

The Muslim League circles did not take the installation of Khizr Ministry lightly and planned long-term agitation. There was exchange of brickbats between Hindu and Muslim students on 9 March 1946 outside the Sanatan Dharam College in Lahore, situated at a *farlong* distance from the Punjab Civil Secretariat in which eleven students were wounded.⁶ The Government reacted and promulgated Section 144 IPC in Lahore and Amritsar, banned meetings and processions, League activists preached violence and communal hatred were apprehended. The houses of those who possessed illegal arms were searched.⁷ Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah addressed a meeting of the Punjab Muslim League party at the Assembly Chambers on the evening of 20 March 1946 and said:

The Punjab has taken up the fight, as the sword arm of India, and you have played your part heroically on different battlefields, which is recognised by the world. Let now your sword arm play a more magnificent part in the achievement of Pakistan. You can do it if Muslims stand united. My prescription is unity, faith and discipline, and we shall win.⁸

The arrival of Cabinet Mission delegation in British India in the last week of March 1946 did call for a peaceful atmosphere to which Jinnah responded positively. The issue of parleys with the Cabinet Mission by the Muslim League leadership was professed. It was at the dawn of next year in January 1947 that the issue of agitation against the Punjab Unionist Ministry was again taken up when a Civil Disobedience Movement was started. This movement after 36 days prolongation

4. *Times of India*, 7 March 1946.

5. Amarjeet Singh, *Punjab Divided: Politics of the Muslim League and Partition 1935-1947*, Delhi, 2001, p.170.

6. *Times of India*, 11 March 1946.

7. *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, 11 March, 1946.

8. *Times of India*, 22 March 1946.

succeeded when on 2 March 1947 Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana's Ministry resigned.⁹

As a matter of fact the situation became grave in Dera Ghazi Khan in early January 1947 when there was by-election campaign for the seat in the Punjab Assembly in which the position of the Muslim League candidate was favourable, but in order to influence the voters Section 144 was promulgated by the Punjab Government on the polling day, i.e., 8 January 1947. This heightened the political tension.¹⁰ The Punjab Muslim League Action Committee at a meeting held at Lahore on the evening of 7 January 1947 presided over by Aftikhar Hussain of Mamdot protested against it. In a lengthy statement issued at the end of this meeting the Muslim League Committee declared that "this position is intolerable" and condemned this action of the Punjab Government.¹¹

Another incident which flared up the Punjab Muslim League was that twenty-nine volunteers of the Muslim League National Guards who were proceeding at Kotli Abdur Rahman, a suburb of Lahore, in *tongas* proceeded by a green flag and shouting slogans were detained by the Mughalpura police under the "Public Safety Ordinance" on 7 January 1947. This also heightened the tension. Sardar Abdur Rashid Khan, prominent Muslim League worker protested against the cruel act of the Punjab Government.¹² This agitation spread against Khizr Ministry and gained momentum day by day. On 24 January 1947, seven front-rank leaders of the Punjab Muslim League were arrested in Lahore for obstructing the police from carrying out a search in the headquarters of the Muslim League National Guards where the police recovered over one thousand helmets and a large quantity of assorted volunteer badges bearing the insignia of a dagger, sword and revolver.¹³ The arrested leaders were; Khan of Mamdot, President of Punjab Muslim League; Malik Feroz Khan Noon, a former member of the Viceroy's Executive Council; Begum Shah Nawaz who recently toured the U.S.A. to present the Pakistan case to the American public; Mian Mohammad Mumtaz Daultana, member of the Muslim League Action Committee; Mian Iftikharuddin, a former President of the Punjab Congress; Sardar Shaukat Hayat Khan, son of the late Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, and Amir Hussain Shah, head of the Punjab branch of the Muslim National Guards. This further heightened the tension in the public. On getting the news of this raid students of the local Islamia College, Lahore staged a wild demonstration, about a

9. *The Tribune*, Lahore, 27 February 1947; See also, Hercharan Singh Bajwa, *Fifty Years of Punjab Politics, 1920-70*, Chandigarh, 1979, p.71.

10. *Times of India*, 3 March 1947.

11. *Times of India*, 8 January 1947.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Times of India*, 25 January 1947.

dozen of them climbing on to the roof of the prison van, which was moving through milling crowd, and later defied the ban on processions. This harassed the government. No action was, however, taken against them for fear of further protest.¹⁴ However, activities of the Muslim League National Guards were banned. In order to balance this, the opposing Hindu Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh was also banned but no action was practically taken against them.¹⁵

Jinnah, the master of political strategies that he was, saw in the banning of the Muslim League National Guard an ideal opportunity to launch an "all out struggle", a breaking point so to say.¹⁶ Henceforth the pressure mounted by him and his party on the government was immense, causing the government to practically come to a standstill. A demoralised government ordered to release the leaders on 27 January, 1947 and lifted the ban on the Muslim League National Guard the next day.¹⁷ The lifting of the ban and release of the arrested leaders appears, as Talbot has suggested, to have been influenced by Governor Jenkins conciliatory attitude at this stage. He reminded Khizr that 'it was easier to send people to jail in a cooperative frame of mind.'¹⁸ The soft approach, however failed to pacify sentiment and did not in any way alter or diffuse the tense situation with the chances of conciliation had by them been totally diminished. For the Muslim League, the release of its activities as also its demand for lifting the ban on its National Guard as also the demand for restoration of civil liberties were only part of a broader strategy. The real objective was the overthrow by force of the coalition ministry in Punjab.¹⁹ The climbdown by the Punjab Government even though belated was on expected lines and reflected the actual political condition and compulsions of Punjab. Far from being in a position of enforcing tough administrative decisions the government was scarcely in a position to even defend itself. Even Khizr Hayat's own life was in constant danger, compelling him even to change his place of residence frequently. Now the time had reached for the British Government to take crucial decision. On 20 February 1947, Mr. Attlee, British Prime Minister, announced in the House of Commons that Britain will leave India by June 1948.²⁰ On 26 February 1947, a compromise between the Punjab Government and Provincial Muslim League in connection with 34-day League agitation in the Punjab was

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. S.Q.M. Jafri and S.A. Bukhari (eds.), *Quaid-i-Azam's Correspondence with Punjab Muslim League Leaders*, Lahore, 1977, p.235.

17. *The Tribune*, 29 January 1947.

18. Talbot Ian, *The Punjab Unionist Party and the Partition of India*, Richmond, 1996, p.155.

19. Moon Pendral, *Divide and Quit*, London, 1961, p.77.

20. *Times of India*, 21 February 1947.

reached on the following basis and Civil Disobedience Movement was to be called off by the Punjab Muslim League:

- (1) The ban on the public meetings was to be removed.
- (2) The introduction of such legislation as may be considered necessary to preserve peace and public order in place of present Punjab public safety ordinance.
- (3) The release of all prisoners detained under trial or convicted in connection with the movement other than those accused or convicted of offences under Section 325 or of more serious offences against the person under the Indian Penal Code.
- (4) The ban on procession to continue.²¹

According to the unwritten agreement it was also agreed between the Governor and the President, Punjab Muslim League that Malik Sir Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana Ministry will also be removed. As a result of this agreement Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana submitted resignation to the Governor on 2nd March 1947. Thus the Muslim League agitation won and was able to get rid of the Unionist-Congress Ministry in the Punjab.²² The resignation was followed by "unfortunate" events. But the resignation helped easing the situation which otherwise would have led to the "civil war". Hindu-Muslim riots had been worst in the cities. The Muslim League circles welcomed the resignation of the Khizr Ministry and they developed a hope of forming the Muslim League Ministry, but, as a matter of fact, their chances seemed to be "remote". Congress and Akali Dal, demanded partition of the Punjab.²³

Muslim League leaders demanded early formation of the Muslim League Ministry "to make further preparation for the final fight for Pakistan". Afterwards there was news of the change of Viceroy Lord Wavell. He was replaced by Lord Mountbatten who joined on 22 March 1947. This agitation forced him to come to dialogue with Jinnah on the partition issue and pave the way by establishment of Pakistan. Mountbatten's parleys with Indian leaders including Jinnah culminated in 3 June 1947 partition plan. This led to establishment of Pakistan on 14 August 1947.

21. *Times of India*, 27 February 1947.

22. *Times of India*, 27 February 1947; also see David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam Punjab and Making of Pakistan*, London, 1988, p.223.

23. Jawaharlal Nehru to Mountbatten, April 9, 1947, Mountbatten Papers, Resolution of the Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal, April 16, 1947, Mountbatten Papers, Kirpal Singh, *Partition of Punjab*, Patiala, 1972, p.87.

BRITISH INVOLVEMENT IN THE PUNJAB TRAUMA 1947

Kirpal Singh*

Partition of Punjab in 1947 proved to be one of the most important events in the modern history of India. At the time of independence, the British conceded the demand for partition of Punjab in order to create Pakistan. The Sikhs insisted for the exchange of their population along with partition of Punjab as they did not consider themselves safe in Pakistan. It was not accepted. This created a situation which enforced the movements of the people on the scale absolutely unparalleled in the history of the world.¹ "There must be many examples in the bloody history of mankind where the extent on violence has been as great or even greater but it is probably true that there has never been such a huge exchange of population," says Horace Alexander.² In the case of East Punjab and West Punjab, more than eight million people crossed the border within three months. According to Andrew, "The massive exchange of population that attended the partition of the sub-continent and conditions under which it took place are most unprecedented in the history."³

It may be noted here that partition of Punjab resulted in huge loss of life. There is a difference of opinions in regard to casualties but it is generally believed that there occurred half a million deaths and about fifty thousand women were abducted accompanied by untold misery — both in East and West Punjab. In the letter addressed to Sir Francis Mudie, Governor of West Punjab, dated 25th July, 1962, Lord Mountbatten stated, "Mosley had written a book which exaggerated the number of casualties to be 6,00,000 (six lakhs). Moon's book *"Divide and Quit"* was praised wherein he had given the number of casualties to be 2,00,000 (2 lakhs)."⁴

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1. O.H.K. Spates, *India and Pakistan*, London, 1954, p. 110.
2. Horace Alexander, *New Citizens of India*, Oxford University Press, p. 1.
3. R. Russel Andrew and Aziz F. Mohammad, *Pakistan*, London, 1958, p. 463.
4. Statement of Sir Francis Mudie. Kirpal Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab*, 2nd. ed., pp. 760-761.

Sir Francis Mudie, Governor of West Punjab did not agree with that figure. He thought on both sides, in the East and West Punjab, about ½ million people were killed. That includes casualties on account of natural deaths on their way or deaths on account of natural calamities like floods in Beas etc. When asked whether the casualties in East and the West Punjab to be equal?, he replied 'Almost equal'.⁵

On the 11th May, 1947 Mountbatten convened a special meeting at Simla to resolve the Punjab problem. He invited Pt. Nehru, Mr. Jinnah and Sir Evan Jenkins who was considered expert on Punjab affairs. In the meeting, Lord Mountbatten put the question that the Sikhs demanded exchange of their population and posed the question whether it was possible? Jenkins who was opposed to Partition of Punjab, replied that it was not possible. Pt. Nehru and Mr. Jinnah kept silence.⁶ So the fate of Punjab was decided by a committee in which no Punjabi was represented. They could not gauge the situation and take some remedial measures.

The target date for the transfer of power was June 1948 which was brought earlier to 15th August, 1947. Decisions were taken in such a haste that they could not make proper assessment of the situation. Had the Viceroy made an effort to explore every angle to the complex situation in Punjab, he would have surely scored some political arrangements in this regard. It was an open secret that Jinnah would have agreed to the proposal of transfer of population for Sikhs. Sir Francis Mudie stated in an interview to the author, 'Once Mr. Jinnah and I were touring the West Punjab riot affected areas where the refugees were coming and going, Mr. Jinnah remarked, "When I proposed transfer of population, the people laughed at me. Now what they are doing."⁷ Mr. Jinnah had repeatedly given statements in favour of exchange of population. On December 10, 1945 he said, "There will have to be exchange of population if it can be done purely on voluntarily basis."⁸ On November 15, 1946, he said, "The exchange of population will have to be considered seriously as far as possible especially after the Bihar tragedy."⁹ Ten days after at Karachi, he went further when he declared that "the authorities, both Central and Provincial would take up immediately the question of exchange of population."¹⁰

5. *Ibid.*, p. 761.

6. Kirpal Singh, *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab*, Delhi, 2nd ed., pp.80-81.

7. *Ibid.*, statement of Sir Francis Mudie.

8. *Speeches and Writings of Jinnah*, Vol. II, ed. Mohammad Ashraf, Lahore, p. 62.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 475.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 483.

Lord Patric Spens, former Chief Justice of India told me the cause of bloodshed which followed the transfer of power. He observed, "the main cause was the haste with which we parted with India. The connection of centuries were severed within days without any proper thought. This has never happened anywhere in the British Empire."¹¹ Lord Ismay, Chief of Staff of Lord Mountbatten stated in response to my query that the Partition Plan which was framed by him (Lord Ismay), was incomprehensive. He said, "the plan had been prepared within two months; for comprehensive plan I needed more time."¹²

While discussing the method of demarcation of boundaries, Sir Patric Spens opined :

"I was deadly against this method of demarcation of the boundary. What do Judges know about the demarcation of the boundary. It was wrong to associate Judges with the demarcation of the boundary. The best thing would have been to depute this work to the experts. They would have studied the problem before demarcation. Such an important problem should have taken some time because it was a question of life and death for several people. The man appointed as Chairman neither knew the language nor the territory nor the inhabitants of the area. Nowhere else in the whole of British Empire, boundaries have been demarcated in this way."¹³

The important communication which caused a lot of misunderstanding was the letter of Sir George Abell, Private Secretary to Lord Mountbatten. It was addressed to Abbott, Private Secretary to Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab. It was dated 8th August, 1947 and it read as follows :

"I enclose a map showing roughly the boundary which Sir Cyrill Redcliffe proposes to demarcate in his Award and a note by Christopher Beaumont describing it. There will not be any great changes from this boundary but it will have to be accurately defined with reference to village and zila boundaries in Lahore and I will let you know about the probable time of announcement.

11. *Select Documents on Partition of Punjab*, p. 770.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 766.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 770-71.

Perhaps, you would ring me up if H.E., the Governor has any views on this point.”¹⁴

According to the communication tehsil Zira and Ferozpur had been in Pakistan. Sir Evan Jenkins while asking for advance information forgot that the information required was relating to an international boundary and it was no longer an internal problem of the province of which he was the Governor. Secondly, Sir Evan Jenkins left the letter and the map with Sir Francis Mudie, his successor, the Governor of West Punjab, which created a lot of mis-understanding.

The communal riots took the worst turn in the districts where there were British Deputy Commissioners like Rawalpindi, Multan, Lahore and Amritsar. Pt. Nehru stated, “In the Punjab where there was cent per cent British rule despite the efforts of certain senior officers, murders and arson continued. The trouble was prevalent mostly where there were British officers in-charge and divisions under the control of either Hindu or Muslim officers were comparatively quiet.”¹⁵ He added, “The British are no longer interested because they are leaving. This probably explains why some officers asked the victims who came to them for help to go to me or Sardar Patel for help. They are not desirous of shouldering any further responsibility and many have become callous.”¹⁶

According to Frank Moras, the noted journalist, “a few British officials had their hearts fully in the primary job of maintaining law and order. In the minds of some of them, the prospect of civil chaos in India on the eve of independence was not without its allurements. What better testimony could be had to the immobility of Indian rulers and administrators to control the communal situation once the strong arm of British authority was withdrawn.”¹⁷

Ever since the outbreak of communal disturbances in the district of Rawalpindi and Multan during the month of March 1947, the communal situation had not improved. Sir George Abbell, Private Secretary of the Viceroy visited Lahore in the last week of April and reported that the situation was serious. According to Sir Evan Jenkins, “there was grave danger of civil war.” Sir Malcolm Darling who had served Punjab for a

14. *Transfer of Power*, Vol. XII, Document No. 377 and 139.

15. Bose, *Now India Speaks*, speeches of Pt. Nehru, p. 162.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

17. Frank Moras, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, New York, 1956, p. 329.

number of years, also visited Lahore in April 1947 and noticed that there was extreme tension and the 'province was a smouldering volcano'.¹⁸

The authorities in New Delhi were not unaware of the mounting tension in Punjab. Lord Ismay writes, "Nevertheless, I was worried at the prevalence of the idea that it was all now going to be plain sailing. I thought that there were still many fearful obstacles to be overcome."¹⁹

In conclusion, two quotations of an eminent British writer who had served Punjab for a number of years are given here :

Malcolm Darling, who had worked in Punjab for a number of years and wrote a book entitled '*Punjab Peasants in Debt and Prosperity*', stated, "the tragedy of the Punjab could have been foreseen and we should not have handed over millions of helpless peasants for their welfare, we were responsible, to anarchy and ruin."²⁰ Penderal Moon who had been Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar in 1943 has rightly lamented as to "why the ending of British Raj, which have so long foreseen and so long proclaimed as our goal involved a last minute division of the country, the precipitate and forced migration of well over ten million people and casualties of the order of two lacs." He has described this as "singular want of prevision and failure of statesmanship."²¹

18. Alen Campbell, *Mission With Mountbatten*, London, p. 73.

19. *The Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, June 3, 1947.

20. 'Punjab Disorders', *Hindu*, Madras, Oct. 16, 1947.

21. Penderal Moon, *Divide and Quit*, London, 1961, p. 283.

PARTITION CRISIS AND D.A.V. MOVEMENT

Vishav Bandhu*

Arya Samaj, to pay a tribute to their departed Swami Dayanand Saraswati, launched DAV School in 1886 and College in 1889 at Lahore under the DAV College Trust and Management Society.¹ Encouraged by its success, soon a chain of DAV Institutions under the banner of the Society were established and a small step taken in 1886 developed into a Movement in the field of education. The present paper is an attempt to study the impact of the 'Partition of 1947' on the DAV Movement and its effort to revitalize its lost glory.

The crisis that Punjab had to face during 1947, affected every sphere of life — political, economic, social, administrative, cultural and moral.² The moral fabric of the society was torn to pieces.³ The Government of India and Punjab proved equal to the occasion and set up refugee camps at a number of places.⁴ Buildings of educational institutions and other available accommodation were used to put up the refugees and the staff was put in-charge of the camps.⁵ A large number of school and college going students were deputed for the social service in the refugee camps, in recognition of which they were awarded matriculation certificates and higher degrees and, in case of those who preferred to appear in the examination, exemption from appearing in one of their papers was allowed, if they so desired.⁶

There were more than 160 refugee camps all over the country, providing accommodation to 12,50,000 refugees. In the East Punjab alone 7,21,396 refugees were accommodated in 85 camps towards the end of

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1. The society was formed in 1885 and got registered under the Society Act of 1886.
2. Satya M. Rai, *Partition of the Punjab*, p. 143.
3. *The Tribune*, November 14, 1947, p. 1.
4. M.S. Randhawa, *Out of the Ashes*, From Khalsa College Library, p. 30.
5. Satya M. Rai, *Punjab Since Partition*, p. 144.
6. *Gazetteer of India, Punjab, Chandigarh, Gurdaspur*, 1979, p. 92; Financial Assistance to displaced Students by East Punjab Government; *The Tribune*, January 26, 1950, p. 7.

December, 1947. One big camp, of capacity up to five lakhs was at Kurukshetra. The second line of camps was at Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Ambala.⁷

The East Punjab Government had to operate from different places for instance, Civil Supplies Department was located in the building of the Khalsa College, Amritsar, later shifted to Ambala. Rehabilitation Department continued to have its office at Jalandhar. The Secretariat camp office was established at Jalandhar, which was finally shifted to Simla on 26 February, 1948.⁸

The education Department had to counter a number of other problems which assumed gigantic proportions. They had to take care of a large number of refugee children who had lost their parents during disturbances and had no resources to continue their studies. The arrangements of educational facilities for the children in refugee camps and rural areas demanded urgent attention. The number of candidates seeking admission to educational institutions multiplied many fold as the non-Muslim refugees outnumbered the outgoing Muslim students, which further added to the difficulties.⁹ For a long time, the educational institutions in the Punjab (India) were utilized for accommodating displaced persons and no education could be imparted to the students who were encouraged to do social service in camps of the displaced persons and were given diploma and certificates on the basis of minimum social service rendered.¹⁰

The financial implications of providing education to such students as were orphans or whose parents had lost all their possessions assumed enormous proportions and it was difficult for the provincial government with limited resources to meet the expenses. The Government of India

7. M.S. Randhawa, *op. cit.*, p. 31. Tens of thousands of these refugees were detained at Ambala, Karnal, Panipat, Sonapat, Hissar, Hansi, Bhiwani, Rohtak and Gurgaon. By about the end of November, the total camp population had shot up to 7,20,000 out of the Kurukshetra camp alone had 2,75,000 persons.
8. Satya M. Rai, *Partition of the Punjab*, p. 147; The partition had put the whole administrative machinery out of gear and there were hardly any department which did not suffer from its impact. There were certain departments which hit the hardest, such as, Jail Administration, Transport and Public Works, Civil Supplies, Education and Health.
9. Satya M. Rai, *Partition of the Punjab*, pp. 147-49; In the year 1947-48 the number of students rose by 1,21,767 boys and 28,421 girls. In recognized schools alone it went up by 1,39,692. See Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab, n. 30, pp. 4-5.
10. *Census Report, 1951*, p. 76.

came to the rescue of the provincial government and took upon itself the whole responsibility of providing relief to such refugee students.¹¹

Displaced students from West Punjab were given financial assistance by the government in the form of loans and grants. These loans were distributed to those students who (1) but for this relief would have been compelled to discontinue their studies or training and (2) were such deserving persons that they would prove an asset to the community if their education or training was not discontinued. In order to provide relief in the most expeditious manner the heads of departments concerned functioned as the sanctioning and disbursing authorities. Relief of college students and trainees took the form of loans and to school students of 5th to 10th class of grants, beside other concessions. (3) Loans were given in monthly or quarterly instalments and not in a lump sum. The loans were to be repaid in easy instalments after the completion of the courses of studies. The total grants and loans, distributed to the deserving students in the district, during 1948-49 to 1960-61, amounted to 27,973.¹²

To meet the rising demand for education, the government increased the number of schools and aided the disrupted colleges from the West Punjab to restart functioning in the East Punjab. It also established new institutions for advanced studies. Accordingly a number of recognized and unrecognized institutions for boys and girls increased from 307 to 5,895 by 1949. The number of colleges increased from 7 in the pre-partition days in the Eastern Punjab of the United Punjab to 39. A supplementary grant of Rs.10,000 each to the five disrupted colleges and Rs.7,500 each to the newly started colleges was sanctioned.¹³

The Panjab University was established at Solan (Simla).¹⁴ A new era in educational planning started with the appointment of the Indian Education Commission, on 4th November, 1948, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Radha Krishanan, the then Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University. This

11. Satya M. Rai, *Partition of the Punjab*, p. 6.

12. *Gazetteer of India, Punjab, op. cit.*, p. 92.

13. During 1949-50 the following institutions received financial assistance from the government under this scheme : Lyallpur Khalsa College, Jalandhar; Sikh National College, Quadian; DAV College, Ambala City; Dayal Singh College, Karnal; Bhargava Municipal College, Simla; Gandhi Memorial College, Ambala Cantt; Government College, Hissar. Satya M. Rai, *Partition of the Punjab*, p.104.

14. *Census Report 1951*, p. 76.

commission submitted its report to the Government on 25th August, 1949.¹⁵

Before independence, there were two types of voluntary organizations running private educational institutions — Christian Missions and the 'Indian Private Enterprise'. The Christian Missions had come to India at the behest of the British Government for the propagation of their religion through education. Their main thrust was the spread of Christianity. They were hardly concerned with the glory of the rich Indian culture and Indian history. Their institutions produced and provided the required manpower to run the machinery of the British Government.¹⁶

The "Indian private enterprise" was inspired by the pristine glory of ancient India. The organisers of these institutions, being nationalists through and through, were motivated by an idea of national education which should wean away the Indian youth from the dazzle of the western attitudes and press them in the service of the country for the alleviation of the sufferings of their brethren. These private organisations were manned by eminent gentlemen who put service before self. They felt the pangs of the nation

15. Recommendations of the Commission :

- (1) The University can be of great help in social reformation. So their aim should be to produce such leaders who are far sighted, wise and intellectual adventurers.
- (2) Universities should produce such persons who can take leadership politics, trade and commerce.
- (3) Universities should produce such intellectuals who can help in spreading education to make democracy a success, can discover knowledge. They can also know the sum and essence of human life; can arrange variety profession and supply different physical scarcities of life.
- (4) Universities should be the limbs of civilization. So they should produce intellectual pioneers of civilization.
- (5) The spiritual development of the students is one of the most important duties of the universities.
- (6) 'A sound mind resides in a sound body'. So the universities should also make efforts for the physical development of its pupils.
- (7) Universities should also find innate tendencies of students and develop them by giving training.
- (8) The Universities are the nurseries of culture and civilization. If we wish to be called civilized we must have sympathy with the poor and downtrodden; should learn to respect women; should be lover of peace and liberty and should hate tyranny and injustice.
- (9) Universities should assign the highest place to the literature of languages and mother-tongue in its general education system. Universities should also lay emphasis on philosophical studies because these help to develop character and ideal character of their students.
- (10) Universities should also develop the feeling of nationalism and try for international understanding in its students.
- (11) One of the important duties of the universities is to render help in social emancipation. They should help students have unity in diversity.

16. D.V. Pasricha, 'Role of Voluntary Organisations in Education', *DAV Centenary Educational Conference*, April 17 & 18, 1987, New Delhi, p. 10.

which was chained in servitude and exploited on account of the illiteracy and ignorance of the masses. Their devout religious leaning, their passion for social reforms, their zeal for cultural renaissance at economic upliftment put them at the head of millions of patriotic people. What fascinated them as an effective means was education. People donated liberally to make their experiment a success. Thus, came into being such great institutions as the DAV organisations.¹⁷

The partition of the country dealt a crippling blow to the DAV organization which had most of its institutions in Lahore and erstwhile West Pakistan. The College Managing Committee suffered incalculable loss in men and material. Property worth two crores of rupees was left behind. Over six dozen institutions, big and small were uprooted.¹⁸

The Office building of the Management, the Arya Samaj *Mandir*, Hans Raj Mahilavidayala, Vedic Ashram, Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Engineering Department, all situated within Lahore were left in Pakistan. Besides Lahore there were other places where the branches of Arya Samaj and its educational institutions were working and flourishing like; Gujranwala, Peshawar, Multan, Dera Ghazikhan, Gujarat, Rawalpindi, Muzaffargarh, Montgumri etc. About two dozen schools and colleges were left over in Pakistan.¹⁹

Educational Institutions, maintained and administered by the DAV College Managing Committee held a premier position, with 9 Arts and Science Colleges, 7 Professional and Technical Institutions, and 45 directly managed and affiliated schools, besides a Charitable Dispensary and an Orphanage. The total annual income of the DAV College Managing

17. *DAV Centenary Educational Conference*, April 17 & 18, 1987, contributed by Shri R.C. Sharma, p. 7.

18. *Dayanand Commemoration Volume* (editor Swami Satya Prakash), Ajmer, 1983, p. 61.

19. 1886, DAV High School Lahore; 1889, DAV College, Lahore; 1895, DAV Engg. Department, Lahore; 1896, Vedic Ashram Lahore; 1888, AS Arya School, Nunmiani, Shahpur; 1892, A.V.A.S. High School, Avtabad, Gujranwala; National School, Peshawar; 1896, DAV School, Multan; DAV High School, Jalalpur Jattan, Gujarat; AS High School Multan; DAV Ayurvedic College, Lahore; 1902, DAV School, Rawalpindi; 1910, SV High School Shujabad, Multan; AV National High School, Peshawar; DAV School, Khanewal, Multan; G.A.S. High School, Ammedpur, Muzaffargarh; DAV School Montgumri; 1915, DAV High School, Jatoi, Muzaffargarh; G.A.S. High School, Hafizabad, Gujranwala; G.A.S. School, Layalpur; S.A.S. Middle School, Tossa; Dera Ghazi Khan, 1927; Hans Raj Mahila Vidyalaya, Lahore.

Committee that year was Rs.10,15,000/- against a recurring expenditure of Rs.9,59,000/-. It will be worth while to point out that the income of the Society was mainly derived from fees charged at very nominal rates and donations collected.²⁰ Though the fee was nominal but the large number of students could make the collection possible. Donation was an important source of the DAV College Trust and Management's income. People had understood the importance of the Society and were always ready to contribute to its exchequer.²¹ The Managing Committee was receiving no grant from the British Government, for it did not want any strings to be attached to its functioning.²²

The DAV College Managing Committee reeling under heavy losses and with its affairs in utter disarray, moved to Jalandhar. 'The problem was to reorganize the DAV College Trust and Management Society by infusing fresh blood in it in the form of new personnel and to rebuild all its old institutions in India. This work was taken up by the late Principal Mehr Chand, of DAV College Lahore, who organized the office of the committee at Jalandhar and managed to bring to India all the liquid assets of the society. All the available resources were mobilized for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the uprooted institutions.'²³ The main task before the management after partition was to settle its employees.²⁴

The members of the DAV College Managing Committee not least unnerved by the magnitude of the problem started afresh with grim determination and renewed vigour.²⁵ A rehabilitation centre was established

20. *Dayanand Commemoration Volume, op.cit.*; Darbari Lal (Secretary of the Punjab DAV College Trust and Managing Committee), *D.A.V. Movement in India*, p. 60. A big complex – old DAV Institutions had been set up at Sholapur, having an Arts College, a Science College, A College of Commerce and a Law College.

21. Satyaketu Vidyalankar and Haridatt, *Arya Samaj Ka Itihas*, Vol. III, Ajay Printers, New Delhi, 1983, p. 515.

22. About 61 institutions, big and small were uprooted in 1947. The loss which DAV Management had to suffer can very well be imagined. Lahore was the main centre of its working. Besides High School and College, Ayurvedic College, Dayanand Brahm Mahavidyalaya, Women College, Vedic Shodh Institution and many others were all left in west-Punjab. Partition had undone what the Society had achieved after a hard labour of about 75 years (This could not be collaborated and it was about twenty seven institutions, which were left in the East Punjab).

23. Mehr Chand Mahajan, *Looking Back*, New Delhi, 1963, p. 221.

24. Satyaketu Vidyalankar, *Arya Samaj Ka Itihas*, Vol. III, New Delhi, 1983, pp.515-516.

25. *Dayanand Commemoration Volume, op.cit.*, p. 60.

and efforts were made to collect the donations.²⁶ The post partition period has been a period not only of resettlement but also of planned growth and expansion. To begin with after partition, the DAV Managing Committee had established its head-office at Jalandhar, but in 1955,²⁷ the office of the management was shifted to Chitra Gupta Road, New Delhi. All the DAV Institutions which fell under its jurisdiction were governed from this office.²⁸

DAV Management was left with two colleges i.e. D.A.V. College Jalandhar and D.A.V. College at Sholapur, in Bombay Presidency. The D.A.V. College at Sholapur was started in 1940 as an Intermediate College and later it was raised to the status of a degree college.²⁹ This college was financed and controlled by the DAV College Managing Committee, Lahore.³⁰ 'The building was erected at the cost of rupees two lacs.'³¹ The enrolment was about 300. It had a very good start.³²

The DAV College, Jalandhar was the second to be established in the chain of DAV Colleges, with Pt. Mehr Chand as the founder Principal.³³ Pandit Mehr Chand (Lecturer in Philosophy)³⁴ was alive to the growing needs of higher education in Doaba.³⁵ The college was opened on May 18, 1918 in a rented bungalow and 26 scholars were admitted in the 1st year class.³⁶ Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College up to intermediate class was started³⁷ in 1918.³⁸ Pandit Mehr Chand soon found a suitable place just on

26. Satyaketu Vidyalkar, *Arya Samaj Ka Itihas*, Vol. III, New Delhi, 1983, p. 516.

27. Mehr Chand Mahajan, *Looking Back*, New Delhi, 1963, p. 221.

28. *Dayanand Commemoration Volume*, op.cit., Darbari Lal, (Secretary of the Punjab DAV College Trust Managing Committee), *D.A.V. Movement in India*, p. 60.

29. Diwan Chand, *The Arya Samaj*, pp. 92-93.

30. Its chief individual benefactor so far is Seth Lakshmi Narayan of Sholapur, who has given a princely donation of Rs. 50,000 for the construction of the Arts Block.

31. It had been decided that the DAV Management will meet the rest of the expenditure of the building which was about rupees two lakhs. Dr. Dharam Dev Vidyarthi, *DAV Andolan Ka Itihas*, p. 222.

32. Diwan Chand, *The Arya Samaj*, pp. 92-93.

33. *DAV Centenary Directory*, 'Eminent DAVs & Alumni', Vol. III, 1991, DAV College Managing Committee, New Delhi, 1991, p. 179.

34. Professor Ram Chandra Sharma (ed.), *Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume*, DAV College, Jalandhar, p. 35.

35. After much hard work a college was permitted to be opened in 1918.

36. Ram Chandra Sharma (ed.), *Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume*, DAV College, Jalandhar, published by the Silver Jubilee Committee, Jalandhar, 1944, p. 39.

37. *Punjab University Enquiry Committee Report 1932-33*, Superintendent Government Printing, Punjab, Lahore, 1933, pp. 179-199.

38. *The Punjab University Calendar 1920-1921*, p. 635.

the G.T. Road.³⁹ The foundation stone of the college was laid in 1919. On 13th April 1921 the college was shifted from the rented building to its own campus.⁴⁰

The journey for the new beginning was made, and the work of the DAV Movement towards progress started with DAV College Jalandhar as the main sustaining base. In lieu of the lost building of DAV College, Lahore, a land already built and vacated by the Muslims at Ambala, was handed over to the DAV Management. Soon DAV College, Ambala (Lahore) in 1948, just after partition, came into existence. Another Hans Raj DAV College was started on Chitragupta Road at Delhi. In the same year Dayanand Industrial Training Institute (I.T.I.) was started in Amritsar and Hans Raj Mahavidyalaya at Jalandhar was started.⁴¹ Sain Das A.S. Girls High School, Basti Nau, Jalandhar was also started in 1948.

A good beginning was made and this spirit of 'March on and on' soon resulted in the net work of well established DAV Institutions in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal, Bihar, U.P., Rajasthan, Maharashtra etc. In 1947, the number of DAV Educational institutions big and small was about 61 and by 1951, the number of institutions managed and controlled by DAV Management had swelled to 82 in 1967 to 110, and in 1981 it had reached 169, much more what the DAV management, at one time, had managed before 1947. The people in general and Hindus in particular, had faith and sympathy with DAV. The name DAV had become synonymous with dedication, discipline and hard work. It was a great come back, and the credit goes to its leaders of that time.⁴²

39. The land belonged to Muhammad Anwar Khan of Jalandhar cantonment, who was his former student. He agreed to sell the agricultural land for the noble cause. The seven *ghamaons* of land was purchased for three thousand rupees. As the College had no funds Pandit Mehr Chand started the collection of funds from his old students and other philanthropists of the city.

40. *Silver Jubilee Commemoration Volume*, DAV College Jalandhar, 1944, p. 36; the building was completed in 1921 at the cost of fifty thousand rupees. Principal Subhash Kumar renovated the Churamani Hall of the building in 2003-2004 as revealed by Principal Subhash Kumar.

41. Hans Raj Mahila Vidyalaya was opened in 1927 by Mahatma Hans Raj at Lahore.

42. As told by Mr. D.R. Gupta, Director Colleges, DAV Colleges Managing Committee, New Delhi. The same view was expressed by Vaid Vidya Sagar Ji, an old student of DAV College Lahore, presently President Local DAVLMC (DAV Local Managing Committee), Amritsar.

From 1950 to 1959 about 13 new Colleges were opened by the DAV Management

— Dayanand College, Hisar, Haryana	1950
— DAV Velankar College of Commerce, Solapur, Maharashtra	1952
— Mehar Chand Polytechnic, Dayanand Nagar, Jalandhar	1954
— Sohan Lal DAV College of Education, Ambala City 1934/Lahore	1954
— DPB Dayanand College of Education, Solapur ⁴³	1955
— DAV College, Amritsar	1955
— DAV College of Education for Women, Amritsar	1956
— PG DAV College, Nehru Nagar, Ring Road, New Delhi ⁴⁴	1957
— Kumari Vidyavati Anand DAV College for Women Karnal ⁴⁵	1958
— DAV College for Girls, Jagadhri Road, Yamuna Nagar	1958
— DAV College, Chandigarh	1958
— Lajpat Rai DAV College, Jagraon, Distt. Ludhiana	1959 ⁴⁶

From 1950 to 1959 total 12 Colleges were opened by the DAV College Managing Committee, New Delhi; Punjab took the lead with four colleges to its credit; DAV College of Arts and Sciences (Boys) at Amritsar; and a teachers training 'DAV College of Education for Women' in Amritsar.⁴⁷ Another college of Education was started in Maharashtra, 'Damani Premratan Bhairuratan Dayanand College of Education – Raviwar Peth, Solapur, in 1955. In Maharashtra another college of Commerce was established – 'DAV Velankar College of Commerce', Raviwar Peth, Solapur, in 1952. Two women institutions were started—DAV College for Girls, Jagadhri Road, at Yamuna Nagar and DAV College for Women Karnal in Haryana. This decade saw the rising number of women institutions started by the DAV Management.⁴⁸ Lajpat Rai DAV College Jagraon, Distt. Ludhiana

43. Damani Premratan Dhairuratan Dayanand College of Education Raviwar Peth, Solapur, 1955.

44. Panna Lal Girdhari Lal DAV College, Nehru Nagar, Ring Road, New Delhi, 1957.

45. Later on the name of the college was changed to Kumari Vidyavati Anand DAV College for Women, Karnal.

46. *Annual Reports* : 1988-89; 1998-99; 1999-2000; 2000-01; 2001-02; 2002-03; 2004-05; 2005-06, DAV CMC, New Delhi.

47. The College was already in existence as Saraswati Training College under the charge of Sri Balak Ram Kapoor who handed it over to the DAV College Managing Committee in 1956 and its name was changed to DAV College of Education for Women, Amritsar.

48. 1950 to 1959, 13 colleges were opened by the DAV Management.

was founded in 1959 to perpetuate the sacred memory of great freedom fighter, social reformer, educationist and intellectual, Punjab Kesari Lala Lajpat Rai. The number of students in the session 2004-2005 was 949 and the teaching staff was 41.⁴⁹

From 1960 to 1969 — 14 colleges were opened by the DAV College Managing Committee in Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Orissa

— DAV College, Abohar, Punjab	1960
— Jia Lal Institute of Education, Kesar Ganj, Ajmer, Rajasthan	1963
— DGB Dayanand Law College Solapur, Maharashtra	1964
— Dayanand Junior Technical School, Jalandhar, Pb.	1965
— RR Bawa DAV College for Girls, Batala, Pb.	1965
— BBK DAV College for Women, Amritsar, Pb.	1967
— Dr. Ganesh Dass DAV College of Education for Women, Karnal	1968
— DAV College of Education, Abohar, Punjab	1968
— DAV College, Malout, Punjab	1968
— DAV College, Sadhaura, Yamuna Nagar, Haryana	1968
— Mehar Chand Mahajan DAV College for Women, Chandigarh	1968
— DAV College, Titilagarh, Orissa	1968
— DAV College, Pundri, Kaithal, Haryana	1969
— MG DAV College, Bathinda, Punjab	1969

In the next ten years starting from 1960 to 1969, about 14 colleges were started by the DAV Management — five colleges were opened in the Punjab, which included one Technical Institute, Dayanand Junior Technical School, Jalandhar, Punjab and two women colleges, RR Bawa DAV College for Girls, Batala, Punjab, 1965 and BBK DAV College for Women, Amritsar, Punjab, 1967. Two other colleges—DAV College, Malout, Punjab and MG DAV College, Bathinda, Punjab were opened in 1968 and 1969 respectively. It is affiliated to the Punjabi University, Patiala. It runs classes for Arts, Science, Commerce and Computer. The college also runs courses in BMIT and PGDCA Diploma. It is a co-educational institute. It is one of the prestigious institutions of the Malwa region with a strength of 2238 students on the college rolls, with 90 members of the teaching staff. Five colleges were started in Haryana : Two colleges of Education for women

49. *Annual Report 2000-2001*, DAV CMC, New Delhi, pp. 65-66; also see, *Annual Report 2004-2005*, DAV CMC, New Delhi, pp. 107-108.

were started in Haryana—one DAV College of Education, Abohar in 1968, and other Dr. Ganesh Dass DAV College of Education for Women, Karnal, 1968. DAV College, Abohar; DAV College, Sadhaura, Yamuna Nagar, and DAV College, Pundri, Kaithal, in Haryana. Jia Lal Institute of Education, Kesar Ganj, Ajmer, 1963 in Rajasthan was started. One law college was opened in Maharashtra, Damani. Gopabai Bhairuratan Dayanand Law College, Raviwar Peth, Solapur, 1964.⁵⁰ Mehar Chand Mahajan DAV College for Women, in memory of Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan was started in Chandigarh and one DAV College, Titilagarh, at Orissa, both the colleges were opened in 1968. Thus, by 1969 the total number of colleges managed by the DAV College Managing Committee, New Delhi was 36 which included besides Arts and Science Colleges, 1-Law College; 1-Ayurvedic College; 1-Vishveshvaranand Vedic Research Institute; 1-Dayanand Brahm Mahavidyalaya; 1-Technical Institute; 1-Dayanand Industrial Training Institute; 1-College of Commerce; 1-Polytechnic Institute; 1-Junior Technical School; 6-Colleges of Education for Women; and 5 - Women Colleges.

1970 to 1981—8 Colleges were opened by the DAV College Managing Committee

— Mata Misri Devi DAV College, Giddarbaha, Distt. Muktsar	1970
— KRM DAV College, Nakodar	1970
— DAV College for Women, Ferozepur Cantt.	1971
— JC DAV College, Dasuya, Hoshiarpur	1971
— SL Bawa DAV College, Batala, Distt. Gurdaspur	1971
— Gopichand Arya Mahila College, Abohar	1972
— DAV College Naneola, Ambala	1974
— DAV College, Pehowa, Kurukshetra	1981

From 1969 to 1979 about 8 colleges were newly established out of which 6 were opened in the Punjab and 2 in Haryana and one in Himachal.⁵¹

1. Mata Misri Devi DAV College, Giddarbaha, District Muktsar, was initially started as a women college but in the year 2002, it was converted to co-education.⁵² The college was established on the lease land given by the government for 99 years and it is affiliated to the Panjab University

50. 1960 to 1969, 14 Colleges were opened.

51. 1970 to 1979, 7 Colleges were opened.

52. *Annual Report 2002-2003*, DAV CMC, New Delhi, p. 128.

Chandigarh;⁵³ 2. KRM DAV College, Nakodar, 1970; 3. DAV College for Women, Ferozepur Cantt. 1971; 4. JC DAV College, Dasuya, Hoshiarpur, 1971; 5. SL BAWA DAV College, Batala, Distt. Gurdaspur, 1971; 6. Gopichand Arya Mahila College, Abohar, 1972; 7. DAV College, Naneola, Ambala, 1974; 8. MCM DAV College, Kangra, HP, 1976. KRM DAV College, Nakodar, 1970 has two separate branches for boys and girls respectively managed by one administrator. Two women colleges were opened, DAV College for Women, Ferozepur Cantt. 1971 and Gopichand Arya Mahila College, Abohar 1972. All the Colleges opened during this decade were Arts and Science Colleges. MCM DAV College, Kangra, was the first college to be started in Himachal Pradesh in 1976. DAV College, Pehowa, Kurukshetra was started in 1981.

During the period under study i.e. from 1947 to 1981, Punjab took the lead with maximum number of schools and colleges started by the DAV Management during this time period. Punjab responded to the call of the Arya Samaj, sympathy of the people, the effect of partition crisis, efforts of the Samajes and dedication of its leaders, all helped in making the DAV Movement a success. Prior to partition, the DAV Institutions had been managing its affairs without government help, but after independence they had accepted the grant-in-aid policy of the government which gave it enough space to manage the institutions. Its past good record could easily make it to the top ladder of success.

DAV Managing Committee is the only private managed committee in the country which is running and looking after such a large number of institutions on its own.⁵⁴ Today the DAV Institutions are no more confined to Punjab, Haryana and Delhi alone, it has spread to about 20 states in the country as well as outside India.⁵⁵ After independence the main aim of the DAV Management was to make itself self sufficient. The partition crisis had played havoc with the Society. The Management had suffered both materially and physically. It started with a scratch and managed to uphold the existing institutions and continued its effort to start the new institutions as well. The task was arduous and required dedication and patience, which the DAV Organization has always been blessed with.

53. *Annual Report 2004-2005*, DAV CMC, New Delhi, p. 96; Also see *Annual Report 2000-2001*, DAV CMC, New Delhi, p. 54; Also see *Annual Report 2002-2003*, DAV CMC, New Delhi, p. 128.

54. *Annual Report 1982-1983*, pp. 2-6.

55. Satyaketu Vidyalkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 516-517.

TRAUMA OF PARTITION AS REFLECTED IN PUNJABI SHORT STORIES

Rohit Kumar*

This paper presents the trauma of partition as reflected in Punjabi short stories. The short stories have been taken from the *santalinama: Partition Stories*,¹ a collection of Punjabi short stories edited by Annasieklucka and Satinder Singh Noor. These stories beautifully describe the chaos, violence and anguish during the partition of the Punjab. The present paper is an attempt to express the experiences of common people as reflected in these stories. The short stories were earlier available in the Punjabi language but now their English translation has broadened the readership of this valuable literature. I therefore, keeping in view the growing popularity of this literary work and the theme of partition which is ever so fresh with the Punjabis, take up the topic of trauma of partition as reflected in Punjabi short stories. Partition has been the most traumatic event in the history of the Punjab. It is a mammoth task to deal with it because during this phase millions of people were killed in the communal violence and yet millions became refugees. Literature helps in bringing certain aspects of the partition to the fore which cannot be described by statistics. The present paper is an attempt to study the trauma of partition as reflected in Punjabi short stories.

People had to leave their homes in a helpless situation, amidst the violence. In utter chaos people could never find their relatives and family members. Sujan Singh² in *Incomplete Men* has illustrated the feelings of those departed from their beloved ones. Paro, the main character of the story, expresses her helplessness when she says:

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1. *Santalinama: Partition Stories*, is a collection of Punjabi short stories edited by Annasieklucka and Satinder Singh Noor and translated by Hira Nandrajog and Madhuri Chawla, Published by Punjabi Academy, New Delhi, 2005.
2. Sujan Singh (b. 1909), was a great stalwart of Punjabi short story. Seven collections of his short stories and five books of prose have been published; his work far exceeds his contemporaries. His works *Ras Leela*, *Pathan Di Dhee*, *Raishami Rajji*, *Rabb Di Maut*, *Bagaan Da Rakha*, *Mazdoor Te Kapoor*, *Punar Janam*, *Parahuna*, *Mahakavi*, *Dedh Admi* and *Moti* can be ranked among the great stories in world literature.

I was born in Dhaka. My father was a landlord. Our house was huge, so he would rent out many portions. I was very happy in my husband's home. My child was two years old when trouble broke out in Dhaka. Our house was in the middle of Muslim localities. We shifted to my father's house leaving behind everything but there too stabbings in the markets and the veiled insults in the houses came to such a pass that we were forced to bid farewell to our native land. My elder sister was too married and lived in a village.

Till date we have no clue to her whereabouts. (p.9).

Common people could not understand the communal politics of the time. Unaware of this there was harmony and brotherhood among the people of all religions. People used to greet each other on the religious ceremonies and they used to exchange the goods and gifts. Affection and memories of brotherhood are highlighted in the story *Disfigured Jutti* by Gurmukh Singh Musafir.³ Vairag, the main character in the story is using the slippers made by his Muslim friends. Therein the writer highlights:

Vairag has been using these *Juttis* as slippers for such a long time that now these *Juttis* are not just turned at the heels; gaping holes have appeared on both sides. They let in not just air, but even dust and pebbles that hurt his feet...Now discard this *Jutti*, every time you wear it, it gives you a new wound somewhere or the other. When *Bhabi* says this Vairag quotes poet Hali's couplet. 'This is the only keep safe of my friends'. (p.17).

The partition of 1947 divided the Punjabi community into two—Pakistan and India. At one stroke, India attained independence but the Punjab was divided. Violence was at its peak and both the sides were bloodthirsty. Common man was unable to understand how to save his life? Several innocent people were stabbed to death.

In a story, *The Sport of Demons* by Sant Singh Sekhon⁴, it is presented how an innocent person wants to escape from that bloodshed. In the following lines an old Muslim requests to a *Jatha* of Sardars to forgive him:

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3. Gurmukh Singh Musafir (1899-1976) was primarily a poet and politician. His works include nine collections of poems. He was posthumously decorated with Padma Vibushan.
 4. Sant Singh Sekhon (1908-1997) was a genius par excellence. Punjab in the colonial era was best portrayed in his novel *Lahu Mitti* (blood and earth). His *Punjabi Boli Da Itihas* (history of Punjabi Language) is the only full length study of the subject.

Pakistan has gone to people who made it. As far as we are concerned, all we'll have in land for our graves here; if God has blessed you with an iota of pity in your hearts, let us remain to serve you. (p.38).

There was no mercy shown towards women and children. Women were abducted. Sant Singh Sekhon has illustrated this situation in detail in this story.

Bloodshed took such an ominous shape that a person was identified by his religion rather than his personal characteristics and qualities. Mohinder Singh Sarna's⁵ *Ladhewala Waraich* presents before us the picture of a young boy who was killed mercilessly and the narrator tells us how his father had organized a function at the time of his birth. The writer highlights the irony of the situation :

The old village Chaudhary while walking towards the fields stumbled against something bulky lying at the edge of the first-field and fell on his face. A corpse lay, facedown. He turned it over and placed his hands on the joints of the elbows and knees to straighten the limbs. The body was of a teenage youth. He recognized him after peering at him carefully. He was Chanda Singh Jat's son...His father had thrown a grand party and organized *mujra* to celebrate his birth and had distributed gifts and bowls of *Karaah Prasad*. And now the son of that royal father lay prone to the border of a field. (p.50).

There were chaos prevalent every where during this period. Religious orthodoxy was proving a handy tool for the leaders who were taking autonomous decisions and making the common people completely helpless. Such helplessness is presented by Kartar Singh Duggal⁶ in *Pakistan is ours*. Rakkhi is wife of a Muslim called Sherbaz. When her brother comes to take her, she cries:

"Oh my Baz Shera, come, let's run away somewhere." He lay silent, immobile, prostate. The Numberdar had told him everything. Rakkhi was a Hindu girl, who had to be sent

5. Mohinder Singh Sarna (1923-2001) is known for his short stories *Pathar De Admi*, *Shagan Bhari Saver*, *Sunder Ghati Di Sonh*, *Navey Yug De Waris*, *Paonta* and *Ab Jhujan Ko Dao*. The Punjab Government recognized him in 1989 as the Shiromani Punjabi Sahitkar.
6. Kartar Singh Duggal (b. 1917) is a brilliant Punjabi writer. He has penned several novels, poems, plays and short stories. His three famous novels are *Hall Mureedan Da* (The Plight of the Devotees), *Ab Na Bason Eh Gaon* (No more will I live in this village), and the Last, *Jal Ki Pyaas Na Jaaye* (The Thirst for water never dies).

to Hindustan compulsorily. Whoever had read the *Kalma* after 15th of August was not deemed to have been converted to Islam. (p.45).

People cannot forget their old experiences. Partition brought only destruction and bitter experiences for the people of the Punjab. In *The Grapes Have Ripened* by Devendra Satyarthi,⁷ the shopkeeper Sardarji beautifully describes his memories when he says while seeing the grapes:

The soil where I handpicked grapes and planted grape vines is left behind. It is possible that you may not believe me today...and how can you believe me? Today we are no longer the masters of our homes. Today we have become common Vendors. (p.23).

The partition of the Punjab changed the whole scenario. There was bloodshed and stabbings at such a large scale that the familiar places seemed unfamiliar in that kind of situation. This is beautifully described in *The Resilience of weeds* by Kulwant Singh Virk:⁸

Even the old residents of the village had begun to find their villages unfamiliar because their villages were no longer the villages in which they had been born and had grown up. Even the Canals running beside their *havelis* had become alien. They could not identify with them, nor carry out their daily ablutions there now. For several days the water flowing in the canal had been gory and many corpses and some arms and legs had come floating down the canal. How could one associate with the canal now? They would even dissuade their children from bathing in these canals. In fact, each object seemed topsy-turvy. Every one was engaged in trying to carve a space for oneself and to find a foothold. Each object cried out to be rehabilitated. (p.67).

The same experience is described by Navtej Singh⁹ in *The Midwife*. It is the story of a midwife who lived in a village. After watching a dead body in the canal, she could not believe that it was the same village. One afternoon while washing clothes what she saw is described into the following words:

7. Devendra Satyarthi primarily deals with Folklore.

8. Kulwant Singh Virk (1921-1987) is considered a pioneer of contemporary literature. His famous short stories are *Dudh Da Chhappar* (A pond of milk) and *Nave Lok* (New folks). He won national Sahitya Academy Award in 1968.

9. Navtej Singh is a genius par excellence. His major collection of stories is *Desh Wapsi*.

...she was washing clothes at the village canal when suddenly, she saw something floating in it. A stench rose and she thought that it must be the carcass of a dead dog. But when the floating object came near she saw that it was a man's corpse, cut and chopped and distended;...people were identifying the religion of dead bodies. For a moment she thought that she had entered another village....But the banyan tree was the same; the old *punch*¹⁰ belonged to their village. (p.72).

A picture of chaos and communal violence is presented in the story *Khema the Goldsmith* by Balwant Gargi.¹¹ He focuses on this as :

The summer was in full force and so were the riots. And then as the day of independence approached nearer, a sudden volcano erupted. God knows what it was—perhaps the ghost of English man, which had fled from Delhi and entered Punjab, from and to end, with a hideous visage, kicking up tempests, tossing the earth spilling blood and carving up bodies tearing through corpses kneaded in blood- he was retreating! fire, knives, daggers, pole-axes, hatchets and bullets from the guns...(p.80).

In such a depressing scenario yet communal harmony between Sikhs and Muslims is presented in the story *Jathedar* by Santokh Singh Dhir.¹²

Whenever they met any Jat of the village they would call out '*Sat Shri Akal*' to him. *Eid*, *Shahabat*, *Rojas*, *Moharram* went by unnoticed in our village. It was rather the occasion of Diwali and Dussehra that all Muslims sowed barley and whitewashed their walls and adorned them with embossed pictures as done by the Hindus. On Diwali small *diyas* flanked their doorstep and twinkled all night long. Every *Sakrant*, their children, wives, elders and young boys would come to the *Gurudwara* and ask for *Karaah Parshad* with reverence. (p.102).

10. *Panch*-village elder .

11. Balwant Gargi (1916-2003) was a renowned Punjabi dramatist and short story writer. His famous works are *Loha Kutt*, *Kesro*, *Kanak Di Balli* and *Dhooni Di Agg*. He was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1962 for his play *Rang Manch*.

12. Santokh Singh Dhir is known as "people's poet." His famous poems are "To the Punjab of Farid" and "O Fair Rose."

This communal harmony is also narrated in the story *Neighbours* by Dalip Kaur Tiwana:¹³

Suresh and his father gave refuge to Unees and her mother. The town was in turmoil....Unees however had firm faith that as long as Suresh lived she and her mother would come to no harm. (p.110).

Not a city, But a shell by Ajit Cour¹⁴ describes the experience of a woman who visits Pakistan after forty two years:

This Ravi was not that Ravi. There was desolation on both banks. They were dotted with tiny houses. The jungle had disappeared. Where must have the poor graves gone? And where must the dreaming people in those graves have gone?

(p.130).

People were disturbed and could not decide whether their future was secure in the new land or not. Prem Prakash¹⁵ in *Without A Homeland* illustrates the situation when Professor Sahib admits:

I have no country. Born in Lahore, I was educated in England. Though I spent many years there still my country was Hindustan. In 1944, I returned to India. In 1947 I realized that my country was somewhere on the other side of Wagah. Now there's a clamouring for Khalistan, and I do not know where my nation would be tomorrow.

(p.145).

Thoughts of the common man are beautifully described in *Shadows* by Waryam Singh Sandhu,¹⁶ when Maulvi says:

Who wanted this partition...they just tore us apart...Maulvi was saying "Now everyone has regrets, my dear brother."
As the Maulvi spoke in a heavy voice, there were tears of

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13. Dalip Kaur Tiwana (b. 1935) is a prominent novelist of contemporary Punjabi literature. The complex inner duality of the female psyche is Tiwana's principal concern. Her finest work, by far, is the novel *langh Gaye Darya* (The water flew down the rivers, 1990).
 14. Ajit Cour (b. 1934), primarily a fiction writer, has nine collections of short stories and two novels to her credit. She got the Sahitya Akademi Award for her fine autobiographical work titled *Khanabdosh* (The Gypsy, 1982).
 15. Prem Parkash is a Sahitya Academy Award winner and one of the major short story writers in post 1947 east Punjabi literature. He has published seven collections of short stories and has been editing an iconoclast bi-monthly *Lakeer* (The line) since 1971.
 16. Waryam Singh Sandhu is a great literary Punjabi figure. His famous short stories are *Lohe De Hath*, *Ang Sang*, *Chonvian Kahaniyan*, *Bhajian Bahin* and *Tilphul*. He received Punjabi Sahit Academy Award in 1981 and National Sahitya Academy Award in 2000.

remorse in the eyes of the crowd clustered around.

(p.155).

Come, Sister Fatima, by Baldev Singh¹⁷ expresses barbarous nature of human beings in the following words:

“The animal is within the man, only horns are invisible! (p.235).

The separation from the beloved ones is expressed by the narrator in the same story:

I remember every bit of it. It was about sunset when Fátima came crying to our house. She said, ‘oh, my dear I’ve heard the nation has become free. And Pakistan has been created separately..., Fatima couldn’t stop crying. She was crying and speaking simultaneously, ‘sister, how will we leave these lanes, this village, this house, these lands, this country? God knows what sort of people live there? I’ve never spent two days even at my mother’s parental home; I get bored without you. What will I do now?’ (p.234).

The number of persons beaten, tortured, raped, abducted, exposed to disease and exhaustion, and otherwise physically brutalized remains measureless. The emotional pain of severance from home, family and friendships is by its nature immeasurable. The common people were worst hit during this phase. The partition brought socio-economic imbalance and literature is an ideal way to portray partition from various aspects. It is an analytical approach to express the experiences of common people. Emotions cannot be expressed through statistics. Statistics is unable to tell us how women must have felt when they were abducted. This trauma of husbands and wives, sons and mothers and all those who were victims of this partition of the Punjab can be described alone through literature.

17. Baldev Singh is a brilliant Punjabi writer. Though his works are not many, his contribution cannot be ignored.

VIOLENCE DURING THE PARTITION OF PUNJAB: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

Navdip Kaur*

The advent of independence on August 15, 1947 simultaneously saw the division of the Indian sub- continent into two new states. The province most effected by Partition was Punjab which was caught in unprecedented collective violence. In only three months, between August and October 1947, Punjab, the land of five rivers was engulfed in a civil war. Attacks by the Muslims in the West Punjab were followed by counter-attacks by the Sikhs and the Hindus in the East Punjab. Soon the whole province was a seething cauldron of hate and bestial passions. The grim sport of murder, rape and abduction flourished on both sides of the Punjab with equal ferocity. Satya Mehta Rai points out that this was a time when communal passions swept the whole Punjab community clan of all decency, morality and sense of human values.¹ She further writes : The communal venom that had seeped into the minds of all the communities, got expression in large-scale arson, murder of innocent men, women and children, looting, forcible conversions and abduction of women. These events left no doubt in the minds of the people that the establishment of a separate Muslim State was the only alternative.²

Some years ago, Gyanendra Pandey complained that the history of violence accompanying Partition had not been written.³ According to Tapan Raychaudhuri accounts of the holocaust in Germany and the suffering of the Soviet people under Stalin can be numbered in hundreds. By comparison narratives of the mass killings and migration in the Punjab at the time of Partition in India are indeed very few.⁴

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1. S.M. Rai, *Partition of the Punjab: A Study of its Effects on the Politics and Administration of the Punjab 1947-56*, Asia Publishing House, Delhi, 1965, p.257.
2. *Ibid.*, p.47.
3. Gyanendra Pandey, 'The Prose of Otherness,' *Subaltern Studies, Essays in Honour of Ranjit Guha*, Vol. VIII, 1994, (eds. David Arnold and David Hardiman), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp.188-221.
4. Tapan Raychaudhuri, "Rereading Divide and Quit" in Mushirul Hasan (ed.), *Partition Omnibus*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp.302-3.

Ian Talbot points out that nationalist discourses in both India and Pakistan stress the struggle for and achievement of independence — and in the case of latter the additional gain of separate nationhood— relegate the violence of Partition to subtext.⁵ Swarna Aiyar has presented another critique of the traditional writings on Partition history.⁶ While acknowledging the importance of studies conducted on the transformation of regional politics 1936-1947, she points out that these studies have seldom focused on the violence. All of them make reference to violence and mass migrations, but the actual moment of Partition have been met with “an astonishing silence”.⁷

The most immediate impact of the Partition was the brutal and gruesome violence which it brought. The experience of human suffering and gruesome process of the division of the country got recorded in a variety of ways, through diaries and memoirs as well as through historical and official documentation. G.D. Khosla's *Stern Reckoning*, J. Nanda's *Punjab Uprooted* and Gurbachan Singh Talib's *Muslim League Attack on the Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*⁸ provide detailed accounts of violent events. Kirpal Singh gives a graphic account of the impact of violence on Hindus and Sikhs by reproducing the reports of the District Liaison Officers.⁹ These accounts depict the ferocity and cold bloodedness of the violence which had traumatic effects on the survivors.

G.D. Khosla, one of the first authors to record the violent event, writes:

The great upheaval that shook India from one end to the other during a period of about fifteen months commencing with 16 August 1946 was an event of unprecedented magnitude and horror. History has not known a

5. Ian Talbot, *Divided Cities: Partition and its Aftermath in Lahore and Amritsar*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2007.
6. Swarna Aiyar, *Violence and the State in the Partition of Punjab*, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1994; *Idem.*, 'August Anarchy', *The Partition Massacres in Punjab, 1947* in D. A. Low, Introduction- Digging Deeper in D. A. Low and Brasted Howard (eds.), *Freedom, Trauma, Continuities: Northern India and Independence*, Sage, New Delhi, 1998.
7. Swarna Aiyar, *Violence and the State in the Partition of Punjab*, *Ibid.*, p.6.
8. G.D. Khosla, *Stern Reckoning: A Survey of The Events Leading Upto and Following The Partition of India*, Bhawani and Sons, New Delhi, 1949; J. Nanda, B.R., *Punjab Uprooted, A Survey of the Punjab Riots and Rehabilitation Programmes*, Bombay, 1948 ; Gurbachan Singh Talib , *Muslim League Attack on Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab 1947*, SGPC, Amritsar, 1950.
9. Kirpal Singh (ed.), *Select Documents: Partition of Punjab 1947: India and Pakistan: Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh*, National Book Shop, New Delhi, 1991.

fratricidal war of such dimensions in which human hatred and bestial passions were degraded to the levels witnessed during the dark epoch when religious frenzy, taking the shape of a hideous monster, stalked through the cities, towns and countryside, taking a toll of a million innocent lives. Decrepit old men, defenseless women, helpless young children, infants in arms, by the thousand were brutally done to death by Muslim, Hindu and Sikh fanatics. Destruction and looting of property, kidnapping and ravishing of women, unspeakable atrocities, and indescribable inhumanities were perpetrated in the name of religion and patriotism.¹⁰

From early 1947, Punjab had gradually been succumbing to communal violence which became more brutal and widespread after March 4. In these circumstances the Sikhs demanded the Partition of Punjab and were supported readily by Congress.¹¹ Paul R. Brass points out that in the last days of the British Raj, it was not only the case that violence occurred as a consequence of partition, but *violence was a principal mechanism for creating the conditions for partition*. Violence instigated by the political leaders of the country was itself integral to political process... could always be brought into play when bargaining and compromise failed. It was also used before elections and influenced their results by contributing to the formation of communal identities and the consequent consolidation of votes of Hindus and Muslims behind opposed political parties.¹²

Punjab became the epicentre of Partition violence. Nobody knows how many people were killed in Punjab during Partition violence. The estimates of persons killed in Partition violence differed widely. It is, of course, undeniable that virtually all sections of Punjabi society could count among their kinsmen those who were uprooted, plundered, assaulted and murdered. On the basis of limited data provided by the Fact Finding Commission established by the Indian Government, G.D. Khosla put the loss of non-Muslim life between 200,000 and 2,50,000. He believed that an equal number of Muslims perished in course of the riots in India.¹³

Penderel Moon, who was working in South-West Punjab at that time, estimated the number of casualties in Punjab as a whole including Bahawalpur

10. G.D. Khosla, *op cit.*, p.3.

11. Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh (eds.), *Region and Partition: Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Sub-Continent*, Oxford, 1999, p.162.

12. Paul R. Brass, *Forms of Collective Violence: Riots, Pogroms and Genocide in Modern India*, Three Essays Collective, Gurgaon, 2006, p.19.

13. G.D. Khosla, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-299.

and other Punjab was about 180,000 and 200,000 for the Indian subcontinent.¹⁴ R.J. Moore in a later estimate puts the figure for those killed and maimed at 5000,000.¹⁵ Hodson pointed out that it was impossible to be sure of the number of casualties because for much of the time in question there was no effective civil authority to report death. Major-General Rees in command of the Punjab Border Force reported on one occasion, '...it was impossible to count the victims properly in the confused heap of rubble and corpses.'¹⁶

In recent years several studies have been conducted concerning the imperative of politics in the course of collective violence and the role of crowd.¹⁷ In the study of communal violence the role of crowd has generated an increased interest. Swarna Aiyar's study emphasizes on crowd behaviour and crowd violence and shows that the violence was organized.¹⁸ Ian Talbot's study, *Freedom's Cry*, is on crowds and collective action, while at the same time trying to address the creation of Pakistan from the perspective of "history from below". This study tries to find out whether the crowds were ruled by emotion or by reason and how they were mobilized. He offers an analysis of Partition literature and the testimony of *Pakistanis* who suffered as a result of the Partition of the Punjab.¹⁹

Paul R. Brass focuses on the various forms of collective violence that occurred in India during the last six decades, which include riots, pogroms, and genocide.²⁰ His study helps in understanding the role of organized groups and the actual incidents of violence and the role of politicians from different communities in turning violence to their own purposes. He asserts that the changing nature of the traditional violence in the period 1937-47 gave way to

14. Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit: An Eyewitness Account of the Partition of India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1961, p.293.

15. R.J. Moore, *Escape from Empire: The Attlee Government and the Indian Problem*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1983, p.327.

16. H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, London, 1969, p. 418.

17. Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal 1905-1947*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1991; Ian Talbot, *Freedom's Cry: The Popular Dimension in the Pakistan Movement and Partition Experience in North-West India*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1999.

18. Swarna Aiyar, *op. cit.*

19. Ian Talbot, *op. cit.*

20. Paul R. Brass, *Forms of Collective Violence: Riots, Pogroms and Genocide in Modern India*, Three Essays Collective, Gurgaon, 2006. Brass's other works on Partition and related themes are: *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1974; *Riots and Pogroms*, Seagull Books, Calcutta, 1997.

genocidal massacres.²¹ Sudhir Kakar's psychoanalytic study focuses not only on the survivors but also on the agents of violence.²² He shows how Hindu and Muslim identities are formed by rumour, religion and bigotry and how these are fuelled by nostalgic histories.

The reasons for violence vary with every region, as Talbot suggests when he comments; "Local political, economic and social variables undoubtedly lay behind different patterns of violence".²³ Penderel Moon offers greed as the reason for the rioting in many areas of Pakistan as well.²⁴ Francis Toker writes that a staff officer reports that greed was responsible for killing in the Punjab.²⁵ Many historians and writers have emphasized socio-economic factors while offering reasons for violence. Alan Campbell-Johnson notes that the fallout associated with Partition is traceable to class, not religious difference.²⁶

There is at least one testimonial in which the speaker clearly addresses the profit motive, especially for the economically depressed classes. Maya Rani, a sweeper describes her activities when her village was in upheaval and the nature of the conflict that broke out: "The fighting was between Muslims and Hindus. We didn't fight with the Muslims, it had nothing to do with us".²⁷ She adds, "From one shop we stole pure *ghee* and almonds, at other places we found cloth, we collected so many utensils that we filled up a room as large as this one".²⁸

Others also offer the same reason, but use the term 'greed' to describe motivation, not economic hardship. Collins and Lapierre write: A motive that had nothing to do with religious fervour was more often behind the Moslems' attacks on Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan. It was greed, a simple, often carefully orchestrated effort to grab the lands, shops and wealth of their neighbours.²⁹

D.A. Low points out that 'the human agonies which they (victims) suffered are, in the standard accounts, often buried away. Often they are

21. Anders Bjorn Hansen, *op.cit.*

22. Sudhir Kakar, *The Colours of Violence*, Viking, New Delhi, 1995.

23. Ian Talbot, *Freedom's Cry*, *op.cit.*, p.50.

24. Penderel Moon, *op.cit.*, 1961.

25. Sir Francis Ivans Simms Toker, *While Memory Serves*, Cassel & Co., London, 1950, p.490.

26. *Mission With Mountbatten*, Robert Hale Ltd., London, 1951, p.197.

27. Maya Rani, 'Blood Up To The Knees', *Seminar*, New Delhi, 420, August 1994, p.21.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Mountbatten and the Partition of India, 22 March-15 August 1947*, Vol. I, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1982, p. 334.

neglected altogether'.³⁰ The fictionalized narrative apparently furnishes a more bearable medium for explicit descriptions of unnerving horrors than raw accounts by victims and survivors can provide now.³¹ The stories and novels of writers like Khushwant Singh, Bhisham Sahni, Saadat Hasan Manto, Krishan Chander, Aziz Ahmad and others have captured the horror, trepidation and fear of passengers traveling in trains to cross over the other side of the border.³²

Ian Talbot in his essay makes use of literary sources to explore the physical and psychological impact of Partition violence. He also feels that standard historical accounts tend to overlook this.³³ The effect of violence on its perpetrators is a constant theme of Partition literature. These accounts bring out clearly the ferocity and suddenness of the violence in rural Punjab in August 1947. Alok Bhalla, who has compiled an anthology of short stories on Partition, writes 'a single, common note which informs nearly all the stories written about the Partition and the horrors it unleashed- a note utter bewilderment'.³⁴ He looks upon these stories as witness to a period in which we fall out of a human world of languages, customs, rituals and prayers into a bestial world of hatred, rage, self-interest and frenzy'.³⁵

The trains were especially vulnerable to systematic, premeditated attacks because trains have fixed routes and may not change them and that indeed their times of arrival and departure were known to the attackers. The narratives of Partition are full of gory accounts of train loads of dead passengers arriving at platforms. Trains would usually be attacked when passing through the countryside, which provided ideal cover for the mobs stopping the trains, as they could lie in wait in the nearby fields of standing crops of sugarcane or maize, and vanish with equal ease once the looting and killing were completed. For the same reasons attacks were generally carried out at night or in the early hours of the morning.

30. D. A. Low, "Introduction- Digging Deeper", in D. A. Low and Brasted Howard (eds.), *Freedom, Trauma, Continuities: Northern India and Independence*, Sage, New Delhi, 1998, p.7.

31. *Ibid.*

32. For partition stories see Alok Bhalla (ed.), *Stories About The Partition of India*, 3 Vols., Harper Collins, Delhi, 1994; Saros Cowasjee and K.S. Duggal (ed.), *Orphans of The Storm : Stories on the Partition of India*, UBS Publishers' Distributors Ltd., New Delhi, 1995.

33. Ian Talbot, "Literature and the Human Drama of the 1947 Partition" in D. A. Low and Brasted Howard (eds.), *op.cit.*, pp.39-55.

34. Alok Bhalla (ed.), *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p.xxxiii.

35. *Ibid.*

The incidents of retaliation were especially prominent in cases of train attacks. Whenever a 'ghost train' laden with dead bodies arrived on one side, another would immediately be sent in the opposite direction.³⁶ Prakash Tandon, a Hindu Punjabi from Gujarat, in his personal account writes : ...train crammed with two thousand refugees came from the more predominantly Muslim areas of Jhelum and beyond. At Gujarat station the train was stopped, and Muslims from the neighbourhood, excited by the news of violence in East Punjab, began to attack and loot. There was indescribable carnage. Several hours later the train moved on, filled with a bloody mess of corpses, without a soul alive. At Amritsar, when train with its load of dead arrived, they took revenge on a trainload of Muslim refugees.³⁷

The killings were not only confined to trains. People driven out of their homes set forth towards their destinations on perilous journeys on foot. The killings of the people in these columns were another aspect of the Partition massacres. The most dramatic form of violence was massacre, the attack by huge crowds upon villages, trains, refugee camps, and long files of migrants moving from one side of the Punjab to the other, in which large number of people were killed including both men and women, children and old people.³⁸ G.D. Khosla's eyewitness account provides village and site wise figures of massacres of the West Punjab districts. His account focuses mainly on the massacres perpetrated by Muslims in West Punjab upon Hindus and Sikhs.³⁹

There were cycles of reprisals and revenge killings in many areas of the Punjab as a result of the arrival of refugees, or of trainloads of corpses that had been the target of carefully planned attack. Testimonials and stories also indicate that refugees came in large numbers and with them they brought the stories of atrocities they had witnessed and suffered. The impact of refugees on hitherto peaceful communities is recorded by Khushdeva Singh, a medical Superintendent in Dharampore in 1947: The unending stream of refugees, and their horrowing tales of woe had an unpleasant reaction. A spirit of retaliation arose. Thousands of people, who had been living for centuries as neighbours in homes and in professions, flew at one another's throat.⁴⁰

36. Sir Francis Ivans Simms Toker, *op. cit.*, p.480.

37. Prakash Tandon, *Punjabi Saga-1857-2000: The Monumental Story of Five Generations of a Remarkable Punjabi Family*, Rupa, New Delhi, 2000, p. 131.

38. Paul R. Brass, *op. cit.*, p.38.

39. G.D. Khosla, *op. cit.*

40. Khushdeva Singh, 'Love is Stronger than Hate', in Mushirul Hasan, *India Partitioned: The Other Face of Freedom*, Vol. 2, Lotus Collection, Delhi, 1995, p.92.

The ineffectiveness of the police and their deliberate partisan attitude in handling the situation has been brought out again and again by independent observers during the period. Penderel Moon recollects that not a shot was fired by the police as two principal bazars in Amritsar were destroyed and looting went on in almost every part of the city.⁴¹ Anita writes that the police were infected by communalism; was illustrated not only by the reluctance of Muslim administrators against Muslim mobs but also by the fact that police weeded out for corruption in Amritsar resigned and joined the Muslim League.⁴² She further reports that a few days before the transfer of power, the situation worsened in Amritsar and Lahore as the Hindu Superintendent of Police in Amritsar disarmed the Muslim Police, and, according to a British report, Sikh and Hindu police declined to protect the Muslims from attacks by their co-religionists.⁴³ Already by June 1947, Jenkins wrote to Mountbatten, 'So far as the services are concerned, we are going through a very difficult period, with some men yearning to leave India, others trying to please new masters, and others again upset and apprehensive. The old administrative machine is rapidly falling to pieces.'⁴⁴

The accounts of social workers and testimonials focus on a subject closely related to violence-abduction. Abduction is of course in itself a kind of violence. Sexual violence occurred in a big way during Partition and could reach the levels of brutality. Collins and Lapierre pointed out: The tragedies of Partition would not have been complete had they not been accompanied, as every conflict since the dawn of history, by an outpouring of sexual savagery.⁴⁵ Urvashi Butalia states that there was widespread sexual savagery : about 75,000 women are thought to have been abducted and raped by men of different religions (and indeed sometimes by men of their own religion).⁴⁶

Another significant category of experience in which the woman-violence association is powerfully obvious is that of 'honour killing'. During the Partition, this took the form of killing of women, mostly when villages were surrounded by mob intent on violence and revenge. The voluntary and

41. Penderel Moon, *op.cit.*, p.78.

42. Anita Inder Singh, *The Origins of The Partition of India 1936-1947*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1987, p.223.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, pp.223-224.

45. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Freedom At Midnight*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1975, p.393.

46. Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, Penguin, New Delhi, 1998, p.3.

enforced suicides of women and murder of relatives by shooting, poisoning or drowning was not uncommon as it was, in some cases preferable to the life worse than death which, it was believed, was certain to follow after rape.⁴⁷

The sexual violence was not limited to women alone but also brought men in its orbit. The men were either castrated or forcibly circumcised in many cases. The riots brought to the surface, writes Sudhir Kakar, certain primitive fantasies of bodily violence...Prominent among these fantasies are those relating to sexual mutilation—the cutting off male genitals, and the sadistic fury directed against female breasts which were hit repeatedly by iron rods. Stabbed with knives, and lopped off by scythes and swords.⁴⁸ He further suggests that the castration of males and the cutting off of female breasts incorporate the more or less conscious wish to wipe the hated enemy off the face of the earth by eliminating the means of its reproduction and the nurturing of its infants.⁴⁹ The attack on children was based on similar premise and the perpetrators showed no mercy to a generation which could become belligerent in future. Anders suggests that these specific features 'are a pointer to the genocidal intent in the partition violence'.⁵⁰

Sudhir Kakar pointing out the main reason for the 'preponderance of especially sexual violence in the Partition riots in the north' writes;...the undivided Punjab was (and continues to be) a rather violent society. Its high murder rate is only one indication of a cultural endorsement of the use of physical force to attain socially approved ends such as the defence of one's land or of personal and family honour.⁵¹ He adds as proof, there is now empirical evidence to suggest that the greater the legitimization of violence in some approved areas of life, the more is the likelihood that force will also be used in other spheres where it may not be approved.⁵²

The burning down of houses and religious places showed that the violence was no longer confined to maintaining a status quo. While destroying people's living places and their places of worship, the violence followed an altogether new rationale. It was now the basic coexistence of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims, in the Punjab that was under attack... the perpetrators were out to eradicate, Anders feels, the physical as well as the cultural existence of 'the

47. *Ibid.*

48. Sudhir Kakar, *op.cit.*, p.37.

49. *Ibid.*

50. Anders Bjorn Hansen, *op.cit.*, p.163.

51. Sudhir Kakar, *op.cit.*, p. 38.

52. *Ibid.*

other.’⁵³ The genocidal violence in the Rawalpindi area, writes Anders, turned Punjab into a ‘zone of genocide’, and a battleground for two opposing and exclusive national discourses.⁵⁴

During those critical times some individuals were caught in conflicting and ambiguous emotions. Ian Talbot writes ‘On the one hand individuals like Amiruddin could save the lives of members of other communities at considerable personal risk, simultaneously they could gloat at the removal of their “enemies” symbolic and physical presence’.⁵⁵

Some accounts also point out that violence was not all encompassing. Acts of mercy and charity were very common. Some individuals saved the lives of neighbours, friends and strangers of different communities, even by risking their own lives. The Civil Surgeon of Sheikhpura attests the fact that many Hindus and Sikhs in the area owed their survival to Muslims: In the end I feel honour-bound to record that the lives of my children and those of about six hundred educated Hindus and Sikhs, male and female, of the Civil Lines, were saved by the efforts of some God-fearing Muslims who gave them shelter in their houses, even at the risk of their own lives.⁵⁶ However, these examples were by far outnumbered by instances where communal leaders made attempts to control the violence.

53. Anders Bjorn Hansen, *op cit.*, p.115.

54. *Ibid.*

55. Ahmad Salim (ed.), *Lahore 1947*, India Research Press, New Delhi, 2001, p.6.

56. G.D. Khosla, *op. cit.*, p.133.

THE SAGA OF COMMUNAL VIOLENCE OF PUNJAB (1947) IN PUNJABI NOVELS

Munish Singh*

The communal violence during the partition of the Punjab in 1947 has been graphically represented in the Punjabi literature. The Punjabi novel has reflected upon this theme thus enriching our understanding of communal violence unleashed in 1947. The novelists try to understand the dilemma of the common people caught amidst changing perceptions of shifting loyalties. In this paper, an attempt has been made to highlight the plight and sufferings of the Punjabis during the partition of 1947 as represented in the writings of the Punjabi novelists, such as Nanak Singh, Amrita Pritam, Kartar Singh Duggal and Niranjan Singh Tasneem.

The people of the Punjab had premonition about violence even before the partition. Some of them argued that 'the partition had become inevitable and so the riots.' The impending withdrawal of the British facilitated violence.¹ There was a lurking fear about the probable violence and much more about the extent of that bloodshed. Everyone had such words on their lips. "Streams of blood would flow. This time *holi* (festival of colours) would be played with blood instead of colour". In Amritsar, killing of some persons cautioned the

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1. Niranjan Singh Tasneem, *Jadon Saver Hoi* (When it Dawned), Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1999, p.111.

Niranjan Singh Tasneem is noted bilingual writer from this region. He writes both in Punjabi and English. Niranjan Singh Tasneem was born in 1919 at Tarn Taran. Novelist and critic, he summons his life long experience to come up with this thought provoking, collection of 100 essays. Besides 'studies in modern Punjabi literature and Qadir yar', he has contributed 8 novels and 3 books of literary criticism to Punjabi literature. He has been honoured with "Shiromani Sahitkar Purskar" Award in 1995 and "Sahit Akadmi Award" in 1999. He is also a former fellow of Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla. In his novel *Jadon Saver Hoi*, he has portrayed, what happened in the Amritsar before the five years of partition, which power have collided, what was destroyed and what kind of morning occurred from the night of bondage. If this morning brought happiness on the other hand there was human tragedy. No body could get rid from this pains.

rest.² Every section of the society had an iota of hatred, people begun suspecting each other. Moving freely through the streets had become impossible.³

The demand of the Muslim League for Pakistan had become more vigorous. The Muslims were leaving no stone unturned to achieve their goal. Even women along with men had joined the chorus. They would often raise the slogans of "We will get Pakistan! You would have to concede Pakistan!!" A large procession of *burqa*-clad Muslim women passed through the Hall bazaar in Amritsar. Perhaps, it was the first procession of Muslim women. They were raising the slogans of "*Quaid-i-Azam, Zindabad*" and "*Pakistan, Zindabad* (Long Live) or We will get Pakistan". From their enthusiasm, it appeared as if demand for Pakistan had reached corners of each Muslim house.⁴ Despite this, intellectuals stood against the partition. Most of them argued: India cannot remain subjugated. Freedom is bound to dawn, but at what cost. The cost must not be the partition. In such an eventuality, the country would get ruined. There would be unprecedented bloodshed. Anything can happen anytime. The Leaguers were surging. There was likely probability of a riot in Lahore and fear of impossibility to stop such an eruption.⁵

Rumours about riots had gained circulation. Newspapers played an important role in the dissemination of such rumours. Communally-charged speeches of the leaders had excited the readers. They were out to cut the throats of other community members, be they Hindus and Muslims and Sikhs.⁶

2. Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, (Play of Fire), Nanak Singh Pustakmala, Amritsar, 2000, p.13

Nanak Singh (born as Hans Raj on July 4, 1897-1971 in Jehlum district of Punjab) was a poet, song writer and novelist in the Punjabi language. His writing in support of India's independence movement forced the British to arrest him. While in prison, he published several novels which won him literary acclaim. His great historical novel *Ik Mian Do Talwaran* (one sheath and two swords, 1959) won him India's highest literary honour the "Sahit Akademi Award" in 1962. His greatest contribution to Punjabi fiction is its secularization. His novel *Khoon De Sohale* and *Aag Di Khed* which I have taken are two parts of a whole. The former deals with the Muslim butchery of the Hindus and the later speaks of the Sikh-Hindu massacre of the Muslims during partition of Punjab in 1947.

3. Niranjana Singh Tasneem, *Jadon Saver Hoi*, p.101.

4. Niranjana Singh Tasneem, *Jadon Saver Hoi*, pp.99-100.

5. *Ibid.*, p.68.

6. Kartar Singh, *Nau te Maas* (Nail and Flesh), Attar Chand Kapoor & Sons, Delhi, 1951, p.354.

A news of a Muslim leader appeared in an Urdu paper. "Children of Hindus and Muslims would be cut into simtherens",⁷ this was a declaration from a leader. The paper also reported about tearing the flag of the Muslim League, incendiary activities and stabbing etc. Such reports surcharged the atmosphere. The people began swaying under communal propaganda. Each communal paper exaggerated the damage to its community. Gangsters began planning to avenge that damage. Retaliation was thought of in doubling the casualties of other community members.⁸ Common people felt the heat of these rumours. Exaggeration played a vicious role. It broadened the communal divide further.⁹ Each person participated in the meetings and dissemination of rumours. These rumours widened the communal divide. Even rumours elaborated the mode of torture such as burning, roasting and cuttings into pieces.¹⁰

As the impending independence drew closer, people got divided into Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Broadly, two camps came into existence. Preparations for riots had become common. Along with this, the leaders resorted to collection of arms. Communal organizations such as the RSS, the *Akali Dal* and *Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam* were active in Amritsar. These three organizations were fully geared to given practical shape to plans. These were responsible for the destruction of the city.¹¹ Common man too had joined the communal riots. Mostly, the people were communally conditioned. Even gangsters had turned communal. Each community had enough elements who were either chronic bachelors or loafers. Those who felt excited from communally surcharged speeches of their leaders also joined the chorus. These three factions had different names: Gangster Party, Martyr Party or *Gazi*

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Kartar Singh Duggal started his literary journey with *Saver Sar* in 1940. He wrote 20 stories, 10 novels, 2 volumes of poems, 50 plays, autobiography and many more. He was born in 1917 in village Dhamyal in Pothohar, Pakistan. Govt. of India honoured him with "Padam Bhushan" and Punjabi University Patiala awarded him a degree of D.Litt. in 1995. His novel *Nau Te Maas* was published in 1951, which is much greater achievement for him. The novel centre round Sohne Shah, a Sikh village headman of Dhamyal in Rawalpindi and his bosom Allahditta's daughter, Satbharai and their ordeals as they journeyed from one camp to the other until their eventful arrival in India.

7. Niranjana Singh Tasneem, *Jadon Saver Hoi*, p.103.

8. Kartar Singh, *Nau te Maas*, p.328.

9. *Ibid.*, pp.357-358.

10. Niranjana Singh Tasneem, *Jadon Saver Hoi*, p.104.

11. Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, p.40.

Party.¹² Riots apparently were seeming abrupt, yet well-planned and thought out. Possibilities of plunder, pillage, arson, murder etc. were worked out before launching an attack. Maps were prepared, lists were discussed. Even methods of torture were planned out. Even the notables of each community and religious leaders came on the forefront with full planning of destruction and inhuman demonstration. Arson material and arms were stored.¹³ The plunderers had lights in their hands at night.¹⁴

In the West Punjab, *maulvis* played an important role in exciting the Muslims. Taking oath in mass to kill had become common feature of daily prayers. Assemblies in the mosques and use of *Quran* to take oath to kill was quite known method of communal mobilization. Orders were given that no Sikh or Hindu should escape alive. In fact, Muslim notables issued such orders and commands. Mostly, they provoked the Muslims to plunder and pillage the property. Even, the killers of infidels would certainly go to heaven.¹⁵ The Hindus and Sikhs equally excelled. Manufacturing of bombs and incendiary material had become common practice of youngsters. The Hindu and Sikh students brought material from schools and colleges to manufacture bombs. They had learned to prepare these in different forms. The rich financed liberally.¹⁶ They had modern weapons of all known varieties and sufficient ammunition.¹⁷ Moreover, the Sikh and Muslim princely states were also supplying these weapons and ammunition. Hyderabad, Bhawalpur and Patiala states were quite active.¹⁸

Each person had turned a planner. For defence purposes, walls were raised, doors further strengthened and daily watch in *mohallas* was reinforced. Even some began closing the doors with mortar. Availability of water, different forms of weapons, incendiary material, stones, bricks to ward off arsonists had become common part of planning.¹⁹ These riots first occurred in Calcutta and then this fire reached the West Punjab. Same was the case in Bihar. Slogan of Islam in danger was raised. Weak minded must escape from the situation, it was argued as there would be bloodshed. Riots were well planned and well

12. *Ibid.*, pp.126- 127.

13. Kartar Singh, *Nau te Maas*, p.100.

14. Nanak Singh, *Khōon De Sohale (Peans of Blood)*, Lok Sahit Prakashan, Amritsar, 2001, p.237.

15. Kartar Singh, *Nau Te Maas*, p.42.

16. *Ibid.*, p.335.

17. Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, p.106.

18. Kartar Singh, *Nau Te Maas*, p.154; Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, pp.29,147.

19. Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, p.16.

executed. The rioters were organized into the bands of 200 each. The gangsters had taken law into their hands. Usually a Muslim band was divided into two parts: one for looting and other for cornering the Hindus and Sikhs to ward off a joint assault.²⁰ Usually, the rioters happened to be outsiders. They used to get tacit support from their sympathetic villagers. The slogans of Muslims during the charge were 'Allah-ho-Akbar' and 'Pakistan Zindabad'. The insiders used to respond to slogan-raising rioters and would join the assault.²¹

In the first week of March, the phase of inhuman atrocities began in the West Punjab. It forced the non-Muslims to vacate the West Punjab. During the riots, the condition of the victims was pitiable. The old and the children were butchered mercilessly like 'cutting of carrots'. Young girls, sisters and newly wedded wives were kidnapped and dishonoured in the presence of their near and dear ones. The girls and young ladies preferred jumping into wells and fire and getting poisoned and committing suicide than humiliation.²² Swords and daggers were used ferociously. Some had the task to put an end to the lives of those who were in pains or breathing. The Muslims were swearing to uproot the Hindus and Sikhs both physically and financially.²³ Every Dick, Tom and Harry was saying that they would rule the area onwards. The streets in the cities and towns were littered with putrefying corpses. No one had the time to bury or cremate the dead. People had a lingering fear of spreading epidemics. Arson, plundering, pillaging became widespread.²⁴ The rioters in the West Punjab turned extortionists, even then arson, murder and kidnapping remained part of the planning. Ransom was part of the planning

20. Nanak Singh, *Khoon De Sohale*, pp.200-01; Kartar Singh, *Nau Te Maas*, pp.44, 94-95.

21. Kartar Singh, *Nau Te Maas*, pp.99-100.

22. Nanak Singh, *Khoon De Sohale*, p.201.

23. Amrita Pritam, *Pinjar* (Skeleton), Arsi Publication, Delhi, 2000, pp. 88-89.

Amrita Pritam was one of the greatest figures in Punjabi literature. She was born in Gujranwala in 1919. Amrita Pritam was already a poet with a collection to her name in 1936. When the partition came in 1947, the number of collections had risen to eight. The moralistic daughter had over come initial inhabitation and as a member of the progressive writers, She was now ready to make her most famous 'call to Waris Shah'. As she spoke, hers was hailed as one of the most potent voices to have expressed the pains the rioters inflicted on the people of Punjab at the partition: Today I am asking Waris Shah

She produced number of books. In 1969, Govt. of India gave her "Padam Shri". Her most influential story at least in South Asian Literature circles in the U.S. is a *Pinjar*, a dark narrative of the cross religious abductions of women that took place in the partition.

24. Kartar Singh, *Nau Te Maas*, pp. 96-102.

but killing remained the final solution. In the first week of March, Muslims attacked *Thoa Khalsa*. There was a pitched battle. Even ransom could not solve the crisis. There was a large scale massacre.²⁵

Conversion was considered a source to escape death. Harsh conditions were put on the new converts. Mostly people preferred death than conversion.²⁶ Plunder and pillage first began in the west Punjab.

Trains were stopped and passengers brutally murdered.²⁷ The Sikhs and Hindus perpetrated atrocities against the Muslims in the East Punjab. The Muslims preferred kidnapping and plundering; the Sikhs and Hindus resorted to killing. Some people called it Sikh-Muslim strife and provided historical context. The Sikhs and Hindus dominated in the walled city of Amritsar while the Muslims dominated its outer parts. The Muslims controlled the entry points into the walled city except two gates: the Hall Gate and Chatiwind Gate.²⁸ In Amritsar, the Muslims resorted to arson. Slogans were *Allah-ho-Akbar* or *Har Har Mahadev*. Within a few days, the city was turned into a smoulding oven giving an impression that it would soon reduce into ashes. Everyone witnessed the dance of death.²⁹ The Muslims resorted to incendiarism. The Sikhs and Hindus began fearing of any such eventuality. The Muslims dominated in the police. The Sikhs and Hindus had fears that the police would help the Muslims. Nevertheless, the Hindus and Sikhs retaliated. They also resorted to pillage and plunder. Mostly, the Sikhs from rural areas would rush into the city lanes and began destroying each and everything. Some articles would be thrown away so that others may make use of them. The Muslims were mercilessly massacred. Those who could never dream of using weapons had turned violent and brutal to the core. For days together, the city of Amritsar remained like an inferno. Moreover, the city was at the mercy of rioters and plunderers who were from within and without the city. None was safe in such a situation. Everyone considered it a day of judgement. The administration declared curfew with a view to stop violence. Extent of curfew period increased and so the incidence of violence. Rioting, stabbing and arson became quite common.³⁰

25. Nanak Singh, *Khoon De Sohale*, pp. 201-02; Kartar Singh, *Nau Te Maas*, p.155.

26. *Ibid.*, p.202.

27. Kartar Singh, *Nau Te Maas*, pp.318-19.

28. Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, pp.130-31; Niranjan Singh Tasneem, *Jadon Saver Hoi*, p.132.

29. Niranjan Singh Tasneem, *Jadon Saver Hoi*, p.103; Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, p.14.

30. Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, pp.16-23.

In June, 'the Partition Plan' made the coming events some what clear. Violence in Amritsar continued unabated till the month of August. Streets were empty. Water channels were full of floating corpses. Events of stabbing, arson, looting, plunder and pillage became intense.³¹ Meanwhile, the Congress declared that the Hindus and Sikhs must not participate and rejoice on the Independence Day especially in the communally surcharged areas.³²

Even the medical practitioners had turned communal. They preferred to treat their co-religionists. Even the soldiers from the Indian National Army, who had fought the British unitedly, had joined the mad race of murder. In fact, they were leading the marauding bands. They used weapons against the hapless people as if they were doing their religious duty. They did not spare the old, the children and even the sick. Only, those survived who either escaped or could hide somewhere. In Amritsar, everyone bragged about the number of persons he had murdered. Evacuation of Muslims began from the city of Amritsar. By August 15th, no Muslim was visible in the city. Mostly, they had left or shifted to *Sharifpura* where the Muslim population dominated. The officials were busy to evacuate the Muslims by trains and or trucks. Murder, arson continued especially in Muslim areas. Home-made bombs had become easily available.³³

During the communal riots, the Punjab got turned into plunderer's paradise. The plunderers were happy as they stored goods looted in their houses. Pillaging and murdering was followed by looting. The police helped them in the West Punjab on communal considerations. In the West Punjab, the Hindus and Sikhs were prosperous and the Muslims mostly their tenants. The probability of plunder got multiplied. Lower class people could be seen well-clad in costly costumes which were mostly plundered. Costly furniture was used as a fuel and costly carpets for covering the animals in winter. The villages and rich families were marked and divided among the groups for plundering.³⁴ Everything was free-for-all for the plunderers. The villagers from the adjoining areas in thousands moved into Amritsar. They went overboard in arson, pillaging and plundering. The shops and houses of the Muslims were main targets. Most of the time, the shops of the Hindus and Sikhs used to get engulfed along with the shops of the Muslims. They had turned bold. They

31. Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, pp.146-147.

32. *Ibid.*, p.175.

33. *Ibid.*, pp.29, 191, 193.

34. Kartar Singh, *Nau Te Maas*, pp.116-117.

moved in bands freely. Even carts, horses and camels were brought to carry away the booty.³⁵ Sometimes, neighbours turned the looters. First, the shops were targeted, then houses forcibly opened up and belongings moved out and houses and shops were set on fire.³⁶ Sometimes, division of the booty led to scuffles.³⁷ *Katra Sher Singh*, a thriving and posh business centre in Amritsar, was reduced into a mountain of rubble. It was difficult to identify this site as a *bazaar*. Same was the case of *Farid Chowk*.³⁸ The scene was similar to the cremation ground where burning logs crumble in the fire. Houses collapsed under the impact of fire. Now there was no shouting, sloganeering, just arson, burning and demolition. Even the house of Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew was not spared.³⁹

The administration, police and army were equally responsible for the riots. They prompted the rioters. The Sikhs and Hindus suffered heavily where the Muslims dominated in the administration and vice versa. Security forces had been communalized. Those who tried to escape were shot dead in a day light. These activities occurred in the presence of judicial authorities.⁴⁰ The administration provided inflammable material like petrol to the rioters. It was supplied through official vehicles along with pistols and guns. Even the police helped in putting shops and houses into fire.⁴¹ Rumours of impending riots and pillage began circulating from city to city and village to village.⁴² Military uniformed and gun men had become prominent as the rioters could act freely with their support. It was visible in *Thoa Khalsa*. They used to demand their share. Even the police admitted political influence in helping the rioters through complacency.⁴³ In Amritsar, transfers in police turned the tables against the Muslims. Henceforth, the Sikhs and Hindus got tacit support from the police. The phase of the Muslim domination in police in Amritsar was over which led to mass killing of Muslims in the city. Both the *RSS* and the *Akal Fauj* had become more active.⁴⁴

35. Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, p.19.

36. Niranjan Singh Tasneem, *Jadon Saver Hoi*, p.139.

37. Kartar Singh, *Nau Te Maas*, pp.220-21.

38. Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, pp.21-22.

39. Niranjan Singh Tasneem, *Jadon Saver Hoi*, p.141.

40. Kartar Singh, *Nau Te Maas*, pp.332-33; See also, Nanak Singh, *Khoon De Sohle*, p.200.

41. Kartar Singh, *Nau Te Maas*, pp.366-67.

42. Nanak Singh, *Khoon De Sohale*, p.215.

43. Nanak Singh, *Aag Di Khed*, pp.15-60.

44. *Ibid.*, pp.176-196.

The partition led to traumatic experiences. The people could hardly anticipate the eventualities. The violence assumed alarming proportions in the month of March 1947. The west Punjab witnessed gory scenes of pillage, plunder, rape and murder. The novelists' writings in Punjabi has graphically captured the agony and trauma. This literary evidence, after rendering it devoid of rhetoric and emotional outburst reinforces historical evidence further. Planning and execution of riots, graphic discription of violence, complexities of human nature, crumbling social relations in a chaotic situation are significant aspects of communal violence in 1947 depicted in the Punjabi novels.

CUSTOMARY LAW AND WOMEN RIGHTS IN BRITISH PUNJAB

Gurmit Kaur*

Society has always had some kind of rules for its continuation and stability. In order to maintain peace and tranquility in society several activities were followed. The community controlled the society through customs and usages. Customs always had tacit sanction of collective will of community.¹

Custom may be defined as a traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular society, place or time. These customs are 'unwritten law' of society and passed from generation to generation. A custom is a rule of conduct which is governed and observed spontaneously and not in the pursuance of law set by political superiors.² Austin defined it as rule of 'positive morality' before it was adopted by the courts and clashed with legal sanction.³

The Customary Law, or as it is called, *mores majorum* or *consuetudinarium* is composed of a large body of rules observed by communities, evidenced by long usage and founded on pre-existing rules sanctioned by the will of the community. It exists independently of sovereign authority. It forms the ground work of every system of legislation. Austin defined customary law as Positive law fashioned by judicial legislation upon pre-existing customs.⁴

In India the importance of customary law was undoubtedly great. The Hindu rulers and chiefs of various provinces never made any serious attempt to rule their respective states or dominion by legislation. They never framed a code of law regulating purely private rights. They did not attempt to interfere with the diverse social and domestic rights, duties, interests of people over

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1. Sripati Roy, *Customs and Customary law in British India*, Mittal Publication, Delhi, 1986, p.9.
2. John Austin, quoted in Sripati Roy, *Ibid.*, p. 5.
3. John Austin, quoted in K.J. Rustomji, *A Treatise on Customary law in the Punjab*, O.P. Aggarwal (ed.), University Book Agency, Allahabad, 1994 (5th ed.), p.2.
4. John Austin, quoted in Sripati Roy, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

whom they held their sway. These social and domestic matters were severely left to be shaped and moulded by the people themselves in these matters by rigidly following their forefathers consecrated in their eyes.

Punjab was one of the last territories to be annexed to British crown in 1849. The custom and sanctity of the caste *panchayats* were upheld by the Britishers. The Punjab customs were perplexing and incorporated no element of religion. These customs were regarded as the 'first rule of decision' and even superseded statutes and laws. The Civil Code introduced in the province recognised it, and this move was derived out of colonial interests. Punjab was very important from economic, political and military point of view. The government depended on its agriculture for grain and revenue. Among the most loyal and courageous soldiers there was no match for Punjabi Jats. Punjab was newly captured territory. People of Punjab still had memories of rule of Ranjit Singh in their mind. On the otherhand, British hoped to preserve the kind of stability that the province had shown in 1857.⁵ They did not want to annoy the Punjabis by intervening in their native institutions. Customary laws were the governing authority but certain changes were introduced for society and only selected customs were supported owing to the selfish interests of the rulers. A general code of tribal custom (*Riwaj-i-Am*) was prepared by settlement officers. Therefore, Punjab customary laws settled matters like marriage, guardianship, betrothal and adoption. Punjab Laws Act 1872 specified that custom should be the rule of decision in cases related to social relations.⁶

Females make valuable contribution to society. In spite of that they have been discriminated against in all spheres whether birth, marriage, education, employment and even death. It is obvious that there is a systematized form of keeping women down, otherwise scientifically it is a proven fact that girls are stronger than boys and have fairly high chances of survival. Even when they make valuable contribution in the social structure and cultural patterns, their contribution is relegated to the background.⁷ Hence, in such circumstances the need for women studies becomes more necessary.

In the present paper an attempt has been made to study the Customary Law followed in Punjab during British period with special reference to women rights to succession, alienation, marriage, adoption, guardianship and divorce. Being almost first attempt of its kind the present study is confined to the area

5. Dushka Saiyid, *Muslim women of the British Punjab: from seclusion to politics*, Macmillan Press Limited, London, 1988, p. 3.

6. K.J. Rustomji, *op.cit.*, p. 313.

7. R.K. Sharma, *Women in Hindu Literature*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, 1995, p. 63.

of Punjab during the British rule from 1847 to 1947. Customary law of various districts prepared by settlement officers have been used as source of evidence.

The preparation of *Riwaj-i-Am* commenced in 1865. These records may be said to be the best evidence of the kind procurable. But one cannot deny the fact that these could have been affected by influence of certain sections or classes or settlement officers or prejudice against women as she was not allowed to speak and that every custom was not recorded. "The value of such records of custom must vary according to the care and accuracy bestowed on their compilation."⁸

The legal status of women in Punjab was reflected in the fact that the concept of women's separate property rarely existed. She was totally dependent on the husband and subject to his will, and after his death she became dependent on his male relatives. According to Macnaghten, the husband had the power to use the women's private property when he was in financial difficulties.⁹ She was under his control even with regard to her own property. The nature of inheritance was male oriented which reflected in the fact that if a widow had sons, she could not give the property she had earned by her own labour to someone else. According to Charles A. Roe, the settlement officer in the Multan district during 1873-79, daughters amongst Hindus did not inherit property when there were sons, and that was applied to most of the Muslims as well. However he says, there was general agreement that a daughter could take whatever the father gave her at marriage. It was the same in Lahore and Montgomery districts, that the daughters had no rights of inheritance of property.¹⁰ But the daughter or the sister could inherit the property if there was no male collateral nearer than in the fifth generation among the Arains, Dogras or Rajputs. The widow got only maintenance when her husband died leaving behind one or more sons, but where there was no male lineal descendants.

Alienation of land by women was rare. Wherever a daughter succeeded to her father's property her right to alienate varied from tribe to tribe. This right as recognized in principle was said to have five variations. Among some

8 K.J. Rustomji, *op.cit.*, p. 42.

9 Dushka Saiyid, *op.cit.*, p. 12.

10 *Customary law of The Lahore District*, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1942, Vol. XIII, p. 40; H.W. Emerson Esquire, *Customary Law of the Pakpattan and Dipalpur Tehsils of the Montgomery District*, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1925, p. 19; Nawab Malik Mohammad Noon, *Customary law of the Multan District*, Government Printing Press, Lahore, 1923-24, p. 53.

tribes the daughter had a free hand to do anything she liked. On inheritance her rights and powers were the same as of male proprietor. At places she could alienate land to anyone but she had to justify the circumstances. Many tribes recognised her right to alienate property only to her male heirs. A small section of agriculturists interviewed by the settlement officers permitted her no right of alienation, if she did not have any male issue. A few tribes restricted her without the consent of her husband, if he was alive.

Wherever a widow held her husband's property she had practically no right to alienate the immovable property. There was a very strong feeling regarding the alienation of the husband's property by a widow. She could alienate a part of it only in cases of proved necessities like the payment of funeral expenses, debts, fines and arrears of land revenue and to provide for the expenses of a daughter's marriage. But even in such circumstances approval of collateral was necessary because they had the right of pre-emption on that particular property.¹¹

Women right to marriage and divorce was also limited and were examples of discrimination. As regards her right to marriage she could not give any view till she was minor. In theory her consent was necessary if she was major. But there was no use of it due to the reason that girls were generally married at early age. In some cases even if they were major they could not choose their life partner because it was felt immodest in society. Some parents married their daughters to such males who were far older than their daughters. The economic problem compelled them to follow that custom. Under Mohammedan Law, a woman having attained puberty could enter a marriage contract with whosoever she wanted to, and her guardian could not interfere. But generally such decisions were taken by parents. Within Punjab there were variations of age at which marriage took place. In the Lahore district, amongst the Arains and the Rajputs, the age of marriage varied anywhere between six and sixteen for the former, and six to twenty for the latter. Though British administrators were against child marriage and they passed Child Marriage Act in 1929, yet in Punjab the decision of Courts of 1875 and 1879 went in favour of infant marriage.¹²

11. K.J. Rustomji, *op.cit.*, p. 207.

12. In 1929 Child Marriage Restraint Act, also known as 'Sharda Act' was passed. This Act defined a 'Child' and provided punishment for the persons participating in the child marriage and indicated the kind of punishment: R.K.Sharma, *Nationalism, Social Reform and Indian Women*, Janak Prakashan, Patna, 1981, pp.207-208.

Married women were subject to customary law and that law disqualified them from entering into any kind of contract. It was only if the husband had given her the management of his affairs that she would have been a free enough agent to enter a contract.

There were two forms of divorce among Muslims—*Talak* and *Khula*.¹³ Muslim women could seek divorce only in case where there was a change of religion, but the husband could divorce his wife for disobedience or misbehaviour, and she would still only be entitled to dower and not to maintenance. Amongst the Hindus there was no custom of divorce, except in urban areas, where the man could put away his wife if she was proved to be unchaste.¹⁴ The custom of divorce recorded at the end of nineteenth century in the Lahore district reflects the vulnerability and insecurity of women. Muslim widows' right to the custody of their children remained unaffected by Hindu customs. On remarriage, her right to the custody of the children remained the same as if she had not remarried, she had to give up the son to her husband's family when he turned seven and the daughter when she reached puberty.

Where an adoption by a widow was not authorized by the deceased husband and not made with the consent of husband's kindred, it only conferred on adopting a right of succession to the widow's private property which was within her disposing power.¹⁵ The Muslim Khokhars of Lahore, the Jains, the Maheshris and the Kashmiri Pandits generally did not allow the widows to nominate their heirs. They did not have the power to adopt a child. But when they sought intervention of law courts, the courts allowed them the right to adopt. But this was more in the form of a formal adoption than the customary appointment of heir.¹⁶ In Sialkot district there was no custom of adoption amongst Dogras.¹⁷

Woman remained constantly under the guardianship all her life. When unmarried, she remained in the custody of her parents or guardians if parents were dead; after marriage she was under the guardianship of her husband or husband's parents if he was a minor and if widowed, husband's nearest relations become her guardians. The right of guardianship remained mainly

13. *Customary Law of Lahore District*, Vol. XIII, p. 20.

14. H.W. Emerson Esquire, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

15. Sripati Roy, *op.cit.*, pp. 479-80.

16. Paras Diwan, *Customary Law*, Publication Bureau, Panjab University, Chandigarh, 1978, pp. 113-114.

17. C.L. Tupper, *Punjab Customary Law*, Government Printing Press, Calcutta, 1881, Vol. II, p. 205.

with the males and mother was not the natural guardian of her children after the death of her husband and had to seek permission of her husband's family in all important matters and where she was a threat to the family property she could be easily disclosed immoral so that she ceased to be the guardian of the minor son. Her own life was controlled as she remained under the guardianship of men all her life.

During British period the customary law became the foundation of the legal system which came to govern the Punjab. The adoption of the customary law as the law for the Punjab had a very regressive effect on the social and legal status of women in the Punjab. It became clear at the Punjab codification of the Customary Law Conference of 1915. Some of the jurists and administrators criticized the adoption and functioning of the customary law. These participants of the conference recognized that the customary law, if codified, would stop all promises of local society. They also accepted that the customary law of the Punjab was extremely regressive, especially when it pertained to women and argued against codifying laws which would result in promoting any progress in society.

The Britishers were pressurized by the social reformers of India as well as of the Punjab regarding the rights of women. Due to all these criticisms and pressures British administrators modified some areas of customary law through regulations and acts. The conservative policy of the British in the Punjab was modified over a period of time with the passing of legislation affecting the rights and position of women in society.

On the whole, in retrospect right from birth to death woman had to work under patriarchal hegemony. As a girl child she had no privileges. As a married woman she had very little power to decide on her own regarding the property acquired by her by the way of dower or *Stridhan*. After the death of her husband, she could be married to another man without her consent. The customs like *Karewa* and *Chadarandazi* signified such practices. Others in the household decided as to what resources had to be opened for a widow. Sometimes a widow was married to much older or much younger man than her age. All this was done to uphold the prestige or *izzat* of the family. All these practices alluded to her hegemony of the patriarchy one way or the other. Decisions related to their person were not taken by themselves but by patriarchs. They did not have any policy of decision making in matters of marriage or remarriage, adoption or property matters. They remained reconciled to their position as 'possession'.

STATUS OF WOMEN IN BILASPUR (19TH AND 20TH CENTURY)

*Madhu Sharma**

The area now known as Bilaspur district was a princely State for centuries together and with the lapse of paramountcy in India, unlike other principalities, was taken over on the twelfth of October, 1948 under the central administration as a separate centrally administered unit. Subsequently by an Act of the Parliament of India, this centrally administered unit was merged on 1st July, 1954 into Himachal Pradesh, as a district.¹

The Bilaspur district lies between 31°12'30" and 31°35'45" North latitude between 76°23'45" and 76°55'40" East longitude in the outer hills of the Himalayas next to the Punjab plains and forms a part of the basin of river Satluj which flows in meandering across it for about ninety kilometers. It covers an area of 1,167 sq. kms. Its boundaries touch Una, Hamirpur, Mandi and Solan districts. Satluj is the main river which passes through the middle of the district and divides it into almost equal parts.² The part on the left bank is called *uarla* (cis) and that on the right bank is called *parla* (trans).

The district of Bilaspur was formed in 1954 when the part 'C' state of that name was merged into Himachal Pradesh. Before 1947, Bilaspur was a State administered by a Raja.³

Status of Women

Since quite a long time women were not given that status which they deserved. Our society is a male dominated society in which women are treated as inferior to men and their main duty is assigned to household affairs. But after independence in 1947, the status of women changed to a

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1. M.D. Mangain, *Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteers*, Bilaspur, Chandigarh, 1975, p. 1.

2. www.hpbilaspur.gov.in

3. M.D. Mangain, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

great extent. In modern times educational, social, political, economic and cultural changes in her role have thrown a new sense of confidence in her.

Dress : The dress of the female is attractive. They wear a frock reaching to the knees, *kurti*, *chadru*, trousers called *suthan* and *chhitri*, *jooti* and sleeper (locally made shoes). A *dopatta* or mantle to form the head-dress is mostly coloured. But nowadays they wear punjabi *kurta* and *salwar* along with *dopatta*. Ancient dress called *pishwaj*, a cotton gown of light texture, has fallen into disuse. Highly coloured clothes are used on festive occasions and women are mostly seen clad in yellow, red and black on marriages but females belonging to scheduled castes do not prefer red clothes. Old women's dress comprises *chadru*, *kurti*, trousers and *chhitri*. White clothes are worn by a widow.⁴

Ornaments : Women are generally fond of ornaments. To wear certain items of ornaments is the sign of their being in married state as against the state of widowhood in which wearing of ornaments is customarily and completely a taboo.

Each household possesses either gold or silver ornaments according to their economic position. The main ornaments include :

- (i) *Chak* : A skull ornament made of gold or silver is used by almost every woman.
- (ii) Pair of silver or gold ear-rings used almost by every woman, except widows.
- (iii) Old women put in invariably ear-rings (*balis*) in their earlobes, gold ear-rings if possessed are reserved for special occasions, silver *gajroos* adorn the wrist.
- (iv) *Baloo* (nose-ring), a circular shaped ornament of gold is suspended from the nose.⁵

Health : Care is taken for the health of women. Previously or in olden days or in ancient times delivery use to take place at home and was conducted by a midwife but now a days delivery takes place in a hospital. Shri Bijai War Memorial Hospital stood at a short distance away on the eastern side of the well known Sandhu ground. The long desire of opening a women hospital was fulfilled as well as it was meant to commemorate the war effort of the erstwhile Bilaspur State during the First World War. The hospital was single storey of modern design built at a cost of about

4. M.D. Mamgain, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

5. M.D. Mamgain, *Ibid.*, p. 109.

Rs.24000/- having 20 beds in airy and spacious wards, two special rooms for labour cases, clinical laboratory, operation theatre and other necessary equipment on a scale larger even than in the general hospital.

The Raja of Mandi State was accorded the honour of performing the opening ceremony. Doctors and para medical staff were provided residential quarters. The attendance as well as the treatment were free. This hospital building too has been submerged under the Gobind Sagar.⁶

Birth Customs : The birth of a girl child is not very enthusiastic as compared to the birth of a boy, but after sometime of disappointment which is a temporary feeling, the girl is very well looked after and keen interest is developed for her happiness.

In the well-to-do families, four *gontralas* or birth feasts are given at intervals prescribed for the caste to which the parents belong if the child born is a boy. On the other hand, if the child born is a girl not much happiness is observed and no *gontralas* take place but a small feast is given to near relatives and Brahmins. On the other hand in lower parts of the district four *gontralas* are held irrespective of the fact that whether the child born is a female or a male one.⁷

Joint family system is prevalent in Bilaspur but now-a-days joint family system is replaced by single family system due to the displacement of the families owing to the construction of Bhakhra Dam and also due to their service in different places.

Marriage : Field study shows that marriage is considered quite important in their lives.

Monogamy : Monogamy is the rule and second marriage is not looked with respect.

Polygamy : Plurality of wives in this district is quite rare. Now of course, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 has made bigamy illegal and punishable.

Polyandry : Polyandry is not found in any part of the district.

Types of Marriages : Interview conducted depicts that of the eight distinct forms of marriages recognised by the *sutrah* following forms of marriages are prevalent in this district which include :

- (1) *Biah* or regular marriage in accordance with the *Shastras*.
- (2) *Jhajra*, marriage by purchase.
- (3) *Asura*, marriage locally called *gadar* or *paraina*.

6. M.D. Mamgain, *Ibid.*, p. 414.

7. M.D. Mamgain, *Ibid.*, p. 95.

Biah type of marriage is regarded as the best form.

Dowry System : Field study conducted shows that the dowry system did not exist and there was no pressure on the bride from the family of the groom, to bring huge amount of dowry. But since daughter was not entitled to have a share in the ancestral property of her family, and because of love and affection for her, the bride's parents provided her with the necessities of life according to their financial capability and social standing. These gifts known as *dazdan/dahej* (the term has no connection to dowry) were in the form of ornaments, utensils, clothes, domestic animals, furniture or sometimes cash. This was done to make her feel at home in the new atmosphere of her in-laws' house.

A spinning wheel, popularly known by the name of *charkha* is an important item in a family. Female mostly spun clothes or wool in *charkha*. In olden times a spinning wheel was given to a daughter at the time of her marriage but now due to modern age this tradition is declining.

Old ideas are changing fast and orthodoxy is fighting a losing battle. Inter-caste marriages, however, are rare and still looked down upon. No civil marriage has been registered in this district.⁸

Generally the poorer section, especially the scheduled castes, demand from the bridegroom's side some cash, varying from individual to individual, in lieu of their daughter before the marriage is celebrated. They being economically backward cannot afford the marriage expenses.

The pernicious customs like buying and selling of women, early marriage and treatment of women as chattel prevalent among all classes, excepting, Rajputs and Brahmans, are more or less on the wane.⁹

Inheritance : During the regime of the erstwhile State the inheritance was patriarchal.

The Hindu Succession Act of 1956 is followed by which parents' property is equally distributed between brothers and sisters. But parents mostly will their property to their sons and moreover due to love and affection for the brothers, the sisters do not take or claim the property of parents.

Widow Remarriage : Traditional social restriction, deep rooted as it is, continues to be strong on widow remarriage and instances are few and far between when a widow was successful in contracting marriage especially among the Brahmans and Rajputs. The trend amongst the castes

8. M.D. Mamgain, *Ibid.*, p. 102.

9. M.D. Mamgain, *Ibid.*, p. 101.

other than the Brahmans and the Rajputs is, however, different in as much as no restrictions regarding re-marriages of widows and widowers are current amongst them and such remarriages are quite common.¹⁰

Divorce : Divorce was unknown in the past but now some cases have been filed in the civil courts seeking divorce. If a marriage ends up in divorce according to local traditions all the ornaments given to the bride by her in-laws or husband has to be returned.

Sati System : *Sati* system was prevalent in the past. The memorial stones are variously referred to as the *satis*, *barselas* and *muhtras*. *Sati* stones are raised in the memory of women who burn themselves on the pyres of their husbands. The practice of erecting sepulchral or memorial stones (*barselas*) to the dead was wide in the north-west Himalayas, particularly in Bilaspur, Mandi, Suket and Kullu. Reference to such stones, as well as to related customs occurs in travel accounts and are already noted in some of the archaeological survey reports. In the eastern part of the hill States viz. Kullu, Mandi, Bilaspur, the privilege of erecting memorials was confined to the royal families only.¹¹

Interviews and discussions were conducted with some of the persons who were residing in the old town of Bilaspur (before its submergence into the Bhakra lake) and the conclusion drawn from their narrations was that they themselves have seen a huge number of memorial stones as *barselas* of the rulers of Bilaspur which were kept at the Shanmukheswar or Khanmukheshwar or Kartikeya temple complex.

There are also quite a number of places piled with *sati* stones, which mark the locations where widows have been cremated with their husbands. A passer-by places a stone or a pebble on the spot as a mark of respect, with the result that at every such place, in due course, a mound of stones has come up. This has somewhat sinister significance. The spirit of the women is supposed to be capable of inflicting injury on her descendants, and thus, people propitiate with prayers on the occasions of *sankrant* (first day of the month of Bikrami era) and on other auspicious days and seek favour of forgiveness. One such *sati* spot on the wayside is near the bank of Seerkhad in village Patta near Ghumarwin.¹²

10. M.D. Mamgain, *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

11. Shakti S. Chandel, *Kehloor Bilaspur Through the Centuries : A Story of an erstwhile princely State of India*, Urvashi Books, Shimla, 2007, p. 498.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 499.

We have seen from the past history of Rajas that their *Ranis* became *Satis* on the death of their husbands.

Both the *Ranis* of Abhaysandh Chand¹³ (1302-1347) became *sati* in the year 1347 when their husband died.

In the same way both the *Ranis* of Kalyan Chand (1600-1636) namely the Chief *Rani* Suketi (who was the daughter of Raja Shyam Sen of Suket) and Handuri or Hindur *Rani* became *sati* (i.e. both Suketi and Handuri *Ranis* became *sati*).

Other examples of *Ranis* becoming *sati* after the death of their husbands are narrated below.

According to the account given in Ganesh Singh Bedi's *Shashi Vamsh Vinod*, Sel Chand of Chanderi was the 64th *Raja* in succession. He had two *Ranis*, Hemvati and Devmati. The younger *Rani*, Devmati was two months pregnant when the *Raja* died. Hemvati persuaded Devmati not to commit *sati* since she was carrying the *Raja's* child in her womb. Hemvati, herself became *sati*. The fire of pyre was kept alive for eight months. After the birth of her son, Mahim Chand, the heir to the *Raja*, Devmati committed *sati*; and thus a pious *Rani* became a special goddess as Kulja Devi of the Chandel families of Bilaspur. Kulja means producer of *kul* (dynasty). According to an account given in the *Gazetteer of Bilaspur*, 1910, the *Rani* after having born her son, raised him and, after having his investiture ceremony performed to be the king of Chanderi; she proceeded to perform what she believed to be her duty to her husband's memory and immolated upon a funeral pyre. After hundreds of years, Raja Dip Chand (1653-65) built a beautiful temple at Sagirthin village (near Brahmpukhar in Bilaspur) and installed *Rani* Devmati's deified image. Here, daily offerings are made. On the occasion of festivals, births and marriages, the members of Chandel Clan make special offering in cash, clothing etc. A similar temple dedicated to this goddess also exists at fort Ram Shehr of the erstwhile State of Nalagarh.¹⁴ All these historical events show that women were very faithful to their husbands.

We have seen that *Ranis* were very brave and fearless ladies. They were not even afraid of death. They could die for the sake of their self-respect. One such example is that of Dip Chand's (1653-1665) wife *Rani* Kunkum Devi.

13. He was the twenty first *Raja* of Kehloor and is said to have ruled in the reign of Sikandar Lodi.

14. Shakti S. Chandel, *op. cit.*, pp. 485-86.

Dip Chand (1653-1665) was married to Kunkum Devi and to her sister. Both of them were the daughters of Raja of Kullu and also to Jalal Devi, daughter of Mandi Raja. Dip Chand died and left her widows. Jalal Devi was Raja Bhim Chand's (1665-1692) mother and Rani Kunkum Devi had one daughter.

For some reasons some of the officials, sought to stir up bad feelings between them. A report was fabricated that Jalal Devi wanted to arrange the marriage of Kunkum Devi's daughter to her brother, who was the Raja of Mandi and that even Bhim Chand had expressed his willingness.

Kunkum Devi was so disturbed that she along with her daughter, maid servants, animals and birds (totalling twenty eight creatures) immolated at Dhaulra.¹⁵

J. Hutchison and J.P.H. Vogel mentions in *History of the Punjab Hill States* that Kunkum Devi was opposed to the marriage, and not knowing that it was a false statement, she set fire to her house and she and her daughter perished in the flames. Both the Raja and the Jalal Devi were much distressed by this occurrence, and to expiate the sin a temple was built, containing the likeness, of the deceased Rani and a *sadabrat* (meaning alms i.e., free grant of food) was arranged which is still maintained down to the present day.¹⁶

Educational Status : Field study shows that not much attention was paid to the female education in the past as it was the common belief that women's duty is to look after the household affairs. But now time has changed and girls are also given education as that as of boys.

The various census conducted show remarkable progress in literacy of females. The census of 1951 shows that only 1.3% females were literate whereas the census of 2001 shows the literacy of females as 70.53% which no doubt shows tremendous progress of literacy of females.

Now Bilaspur women have excelled in various fields and have become doctors, engineers and professors. Mention must be made of Professor Bhuvan Chandel of Panoh who was the Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Rashtrapati Niwas, Shimla from 2003 to 2006.

Economic Status : Economic status of women is equally important. Women work both inside and outside the house. She gets up early in the

15. Shakti S. Chandel, *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

16. Hutchinson, J. and P.H. Vogel; *History of the Punjab Hill States*, Vol. II (First Published in 1933 by The Superintendent, Govt. Printing, Punjab, Lahore. Reprint 2000. Director of Language and Culture, Himachal Pradesh), Shimla, p. 503.

morning in order to milk the animals, make butter as well as to make food for the family members. After doing work at house she goes to the forests or fields and bring firewood as well as fodder for the animals. She even cleans the cattleshed, plastering the house with cow dung and even take care of the sick animals. Women in rural areas work like a machine from morning till evening. She does the work with a smile on her face except when she is ill. *Purdah* system is still there but due to modernization it is becoming extinct in modern families.

Mat making was also the primitive cottage industries here. Quite a large number of ladies used to get part-time employment in this industry but now it has declined. Sericulture is another important industry. During the season a number of women get employment.

Recreation : Women do not play any outdoor games. *Giddha*, the famous folk dance of the Punjab from wherever it has entered has made its way into the Bilaspur district. *Giddha*, the joyful dance is mainly a sole possession of the females.

The last ruler, Anand Chand was quite anxious to provide amenities for a club for women too who were mainly confined to the four walls of the houses. A separate ladies' club called Shree Uma Club was founded. A building was specially put up to provide commodious room for ping-pong, another for indoor games, a library and adequate accommodation for sitting.¹⁷ This club building was submerged in 1962 with the formation of Gobind Sagar.

Conclusion

No doubt the women of Bilaspur have become independent economically. They have started working shoulder to shoulder with men in nearly every field. The spread of education among women has raised their social status in the society. Women do not take alcohol. Incidence of prostitution as well as traffic in female is practically absent. Women of Bilaspur no doubt have excelled in nearly all the fields.

17. M.D. Mamgain, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

EMERGING TRENDS IN FEMALE EDUCATION IN COLONIAL PUNJAB (1901-1910)

(Summary)

*Parneet Hayer**

The census of 1911 instructed to regard a person as a literate, if he was able to read and write any language. The person was required to write a letter to a friend and read his reply. On that basis various new trends were emerging in the field of education, especially for females. Female education made wonderful progress during the decade 1901-10. Large number of girls schools by municipal boards and by private enterprises had been established. But the extent of literacy varied according to the colonial rule of the British. Female education was widely diffused in British provinces than in the Native states. Even it was found that female education varied inversely with the prevalence of the *parda* system in the colonial Punjab. Districts like Simla which were the seats of Provincial and Imperial government also encouraged girls' education. The trading class of Punjab had number of literate women. People living in towns and cities worked for the education of girls. A new emerging trend was seen for girls as the education imparted was not according to caste but according to the occupation and need. For example earlier Brahman women were more educated but now women of traders and priests started studying. New trends during 1901-10 were also seen in the geographical division of the Punjab. The plain portion of the central Punjab was most forward in education. The eastern Punjab was most backward in female literacy and the hilly portion of the central Punjab was only slightly better. The western Punjab stood almost same in the literacy of women because it was the centre of trade and government.

Same trends have been seen on the national level. Female education decreased as one moved from coastal areas to the inland provinces. The provincial government also encouraged education. Thus, a similar trend has been seen in the female education in Punjab and in whole of India from 1901-10.

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COMMUNALISM – A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS

Jagdish Kumar*

Communalism has attracted the attention of historians and scholars since the beginning of twentieth century and a number of studies, dealing with its various aspects, are available. Here in this paper an attempt has been made to analyze some of them and categorize on the basis of the factors held responsible for the rise of communalism.

The paper is divided into three sections; first, dealing with those studies that highlight cultural factors; second, those held responsible British policy of 'Divide and Rule'; and third, which give credence to the role of socio-economic factors.

I

The orientalists and evangelicals were the first, followed by British administrative historians, to initiate and develop the idea of 'Hindus' and 'Muslims', each being a 'separate homogeneous group' in the nineteenth century. James Mill laid the foundation for a communal interpretation of Indian history in his work *History of British India*, by dividing Indian history into three periods, 'Hindu Civilization', 'Muslim Civilization' and 'British Civilization'.¹ Herein he projects the Hindus and Muslims of the sub-continent as two irreconcilable nations being at war with each other for centuries.

Because British historians came largely from the ranks of administrators, fed on Mill's history during their training, were pre-occupied with a biased approach towards Indian history. They firmly established through their writings that Muslims were foreigners to India and British had liberated the Hindus from the tyranny of 'Muslim' rulers. It was further asserted that Hindus and Muslims were always divided and at loggerheads and they could not live peacefully with each other.

Hindu and Muslim communalists borrowed heavily from the 'historical facts' of British historians. They saw medieval Indian history as one long

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1. Romila Thapar, 'Communalism and the Writing of Ancient Indian History', in Romila Thapar, et. al., *Communalism and the Writing of Indian History*, New Delhi, 1969, p.4.

story of Hindu-Muslim conflict and both groups permanently divided into separate camps whose mutual relations were bitter, distrustful and hostile. Thus in 'Hindu' accounts Muslims became barbarous alien invaders who forcibly converted and destroyed temples, while the 'Muslim' accounts stressed upon the irreconcilable differences between Muslims and Hindus. Thus, heroes and villains were interchangeable depending on the author.

During the freedom struggle communalist groups used the symbols and terms of their religions to formulate their positions that sharpened the religious antagonism. V.D. Savarkar, in his work '*Hindutva*' asserted that "the day, when Mohammad Gazani crossed the Indus (that day) the conflict of life and death began."² M.A. Jinnah expressed somewhat similar feelings in his presidential address at Lahore session of Muslim League in 1940. "The history of the last twelve hundred years has failed to achieve unity and has witnessed during the ages India always divided into Hindu and Muslim India."³

Even after the independence some historians in India and Pakistan still hold this view. In Pakistan some historians maintain that the Muslims were always a separate nation from the Hindus and only awaited inspiration and leadership to assert this fact. According to them partition of the country was inevitable due to the 'separate Muslim nation' and it was a final triumph of the 'Muslim nationalism'.⁴ This approach culminated in the recently published two volumes of *Road to Pakistan* (edited by Mohammad Said) written by 'prominent historians and scholars' that traces the history of 'Muslim rule' from the A.D. 712 when Muhammad Bin Qasim entered the Sind.

In India, the proponent of this theory was R.C. Majumdar who talked of 'Hindu nationalism' and 'Muslim nationalism'.⁵ In his voluminous work *History and Culture of Indian People*,⁶ he contended that the entire period from c. 1200 onwards was one of foreign rule. Muslims were alien to Hindu culture; the Hindus oppressed and humiliated, wished nothing better than to slaughter the Muslims. He further argued that the British rule was more civilized

2. V. D. Savarkar, quoted in Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India*, New Delhi, 1996 (Reprint), p.215.
3. See for details, how the leaders of different communities took advantage of the communal view of the Indian history, Bipan Chandra, *Ibid.*, pp. 214-236.
4. I. H. Qureshi, *The Muslim Community of Indo-Pakistan Sub-continent: A Brief Historical Analysis*, The Hague, 1962; and K.K Aziz, *The Making of Pakistan: A Study in Nationalism*, London, 1967.
5. R. C. Majumdar, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol.-I, Calcutta, 1962, pp.329-37.
6. R. C. Majumdar, *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Bombay, 1974.

than “Muslim rule” and the national movement’s course was throughout distorted by separate demands made by Muslims. Thus, he ‘adopted a totally communal approach towards the problem’.⁷

Thus both the Hindu and Muslim communal schools share a very large area of common ground and both see the two religious communities as constant political entities and therefore in effect separate nations.

Louis Dumont, a sociologist, while analyzing nationalism and communalism in India, followed the same approach.⁸ According to him, the more or less peaceful co-existence of two communities after the Muslim conquest did not produce any ‘general ideological synthesis’. Lack of ideological synthesis created lasting social ‘heterogeneity of the two communities’ and during the British rule, revivalist movements in the two communities further reaffirmed the traditional values. Subsequent growth of political parties too failed to transcend the traditional social structure. Dumont accuses both the Congress and the Muslim League for injecting religion into politics.

An Indian sociologist, Satish Saberwal in his analysis of communalism elaborates Dumont’s view regarding the key role of ideas and traditions.⁹ He refers to general reluctance among social scientists ‘to take serious account of religious beliefs and institutions’ for understanding communalism. He also establishes the linkage of religious ideas and symbols to the social structure. Regarding the genesis of Hindu-Muslim communalism, he concludes:

The rise of communalism during the colonial period should perhaps be seen in relation to the long standing separateness of the religious network, the acute social distance expressing a high level of social antagonism between Muslims and Hindus.¹⁰

C.A.Bayly, in his controversial article titled ‘The Pre-History of ‘Communalism’? Religious Conflict in India, 1700 – 1860’, contends that while syncretism was important during nineteenth centuries, Hindus and Muslims did have at that time well developed communal perception, and there

7. Bipan Chandra, “Nationalist Historians’ Interpretations of the Indian National Movement”, in Romila Thapar and S. Bhattacharya (eds.), *Situating Indian History*, New Delhi, 1986, p. 270.

8. Louis Dumont, ‘Nationalism and Communalism’, in *Religion, Politics and History in India: Collected Papers in Indian Sociology*, Paris, 1970.

9. Satish Saberwal, ‘Elements of Communalism-I’, *Mainstream*, No. 29, 21st March, 1987; and ‘Elements of Communalism-II’, *Mainstream*, No. 30, 23rd March, 1987.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

were local outbreaks of violence between them for political, economic and cultural reasons. According to him the extensive documentary evidence of Hindu-Muslim riots in north Indian cities during the first half of the nineteenth century shows that "their origins and form seemed remarkably similar to those of the riots of the later half of the century."¹¹ He further argues that the 'land wars' of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were equally communal in character like that of the communal riots that occurred in the late nineteenth century.

Bayly has totally decontextualized the communal riots that occurred in the late nineteenth century, because the nature of the state in the eighteenth century in north India in which the 'land wars' occurred is totally different from the nature of the state under the British rule. Thus, analyzing a particular event without considering the context in which it appeared would be totally misleading. As Gramsci has rightly maintained that "since the complex of social relations was different in each state",¹² so the forces that operate would also be different. Thus, it is baseless to conclude that the 'land wars' of eighteenth century are similar to the 'communal riots' of nineteenth and twentieth century. Only a scholar of 'Cambridge school of historians like Kamaljit Bhasin Malik, can accolade Bayly for 'filling the lacuna of the actual history of the relations of Hindus and Muslims in the pre-British period'.¹³

Above-mentioned scholars treat the Hindus and the Muslims as a single entity or homogeneous community and then more often discuss them as such and within communal digits. So they conclude that emergence of communalism was a consequence of socio – religious distance between Hindus and Muslims. But as Benedict Anderson has reminded us that all communities – from the 'little community' of the village, to the dialect community spanning a wide region, to the community called the nation – are 'imagined', 'made'.¹⁴ Thus, it's totally wrong to assume that Hindus and Muslims were homogeneous groups and they were always at odds with each other.

II

Another explanation put forward by the nationalist leaders and some historians during the freedom struggle was that communalism developed in

11. C. A. Bayly, 'The Pre-History of 'Communalism'? Religious Conflict in India, 1700-1860', in *Modern Asian Studies*, Volume 19, Issue 2 (1985), p.178.

12. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections From the Prison Notebooks*, Chennai, 1998, p.229.

13. Kamaljit Bhasin Malik, *In the Making – Identity Formation in South Asia*, Gurgaon, 2007, pp.9-10 .

14. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, 1983.

India due to the 'divide and rule' policy of the British government. It was argued that the British deliberately adopted this policy to divide the people on religious lines and when the elections were introduced as a result of nationalist pressure, British took care to see that the electorates were divided along communal lines. They made British government responsible for encouraging and fostering Muslim separatism, arguing that the British introduced separate electorates and granted special concessions to the Muslims in order to disrupt the Indian National Movement. Events such as partition of Bengal, The Indian Councils Act, The Montague-Chelmsford Reforms, The Communal Award and so on are cited as examples of how British systematically played one community against the other, for the survival of their rule.

Lala Lajpat Rai, writing in 1928, explicitly blamed the British for deliberately applying the policy of 'Divide and Rule' in his work *Unhappy India*.¹⁵ He has quoted extensively from British records to support his view viz.,...a British officer under the assumed name of "Carnaticus" wrote in the *Asiatic Review* that: "*Divide et impera should be the motto of our Indian administration, whether political, civil or military.*" The Secretary of State for India wrote to Viceroy, Lord Elgin (1862-63), "*We have maintained our power in India by playing-off one part against the other and we must continue to do so. Do all you can, therefore, to prevent all having a common feeling.*" The Secretary of State in London wrote to Lord Dufferin, "*The division of religious feelings is greatly to our advantage.*" Similarly, Lord Curzon was told by the Secretary of State for India, George Francis Hamilton, that they '*should so plan the educational text books that the differences between community and community are further strengthened.*'

He devoted an entire chapter titled '*Divide - et - Impera*' to elaborate this view. He argues, "the policy of divide and rule is the sheet anchor of all imperial governments. British rule in India has been persistently following that policy. In the earlier phase the slogan was 'Mussalmans must be suppressed'; today it is "they must be won over and pitted against the nationalists."¹⁶ Another nationalist leader, Rajindra Prasad holds similar views, "The present seemingly irreconcilable differences between the Hindus and Muslims are in no small measures the result of a deliberate application of the policy of divide and rule."¹⁷

15. Lala Lajpat Rai, *Unhappy India*, Calcutta, 1928, pp.399-410.

16. *Ibid.*, pp.399-400.

17. Rajindra Prasad, *India Divided*, Bombay, 1946, p.30.

An example of Indian National Congress' approach towards the communal problem from this point of view could be seen in the *Report of Kanpur Riots Enquiry Committee*. The committee submitted its report to the All India Congress Committee in 1931. The *Report* points out that there had been a national synthesis of Hindus and Muslims before the British split them apart. To support this view, quotes from the British official records were cited like "‘Divide et impera’ was the old Roman motto and it should be ours". The *Report* in its "Historical Retrospect" to the communal problem concludes, "The British government was acting with regard to India on the policy of 'Divide and Rule'. Sometimes they favoured the Hindus, than the Musalmans, again the Hindus and so on as occasion required."¹⁸

Various schools of historians have conveniently but uncritically accepted this argument during the freedom struggle as well as after the independence that was often employed by Indian leaders during the freedom struggle.¹⁹ Mehta and Patwardhan's work, *The Communal Triangle in India*, written in 1941, remains the classic exposition of this theory.²⁰ It points to the British introduction of separate electorates as an intentional policy to foster inter communal conflicts and so to prevent the growth of a spirit of national resistance to their rule.

III

Socio-economic factors were put forward as explanation of communalism from the early part of the twentieth century and became important during the 1920s, when Socialists and Marxists began taking a prominent part in the national movement.²¹ The Marxist explanation of communalism is that it is the creation of bourgeois classes which succeeded, by using religious symbols, in getting a measure of mass sympathy and support for programmes and demands, which have absolutely nothing to do with the masses or even the lower middle class. The class differences among the different groups were given the shape of religious differences by competing elite to blind the masses to the reality of the class struggle.

Nehru, in his autobiography, viewed the origin of communal tension from the Marxian point of view in 1936. He blamed the 'bourgeois classes'

18. *Report of the Kanpur Riots Inquiry Committee*, 1931, published as *Roots of Communal Politics*, edited by N.G. Barrier, New Delhi, 1976, p. 169.

19. Beni Prasad, *The Hindu-Muslim Questions*, Allahabad, 1941; Rajindra Prasad, *op.cit.*, are a few examples on this theme.

20. A. Mehta and A. Patwardhan, *The Communal Triangle in India*, Allahabad, 1941.

21. Peter Heehs, *Nationalism, Terrorism, Communalism*, Delhi, 1998, p.125.

both among the Hindus and the Muslims for fostering communal tensions in the name of religion. He argues, "the communal demands put forward by any communal group is, in the final analysis, a demand for jobs, and these jobs could only go to a handful of the upper middle class...narrow political demands, benefiting at the most a small number of the upper middle classes, and often creating barriers in the way of national unity and progress, were cleverly made to appear the demands of the masses of that particular religious group."²² Analyzing the role of communal leaders in misinterpreting class conflicts into religious conflicts, he wrote, "the Muslim communal leaders managed to exploit the antagonism of have-nots against the haves for communal purposes had nothing to do with the betterment of those have-nots." Similarly, "the Hindu communal leaders represented the rich banker and professional classes and had little backing among the Hindus."²³

Similar claims were made by K.B. Krishna in his work *The problem of Minorities*. He contends, "the communal question has no reference to religious issues. They refer to spoils and percentages, seats and favours. The communal question is in general a question of struggle between various sections of the professional classes belonging to different faiths."²⁴ R. Palme Dutt holds the similar views while analyzing the communal problem. He argues that the root cause of the communal tensions was the socio-economic rivalry among the rising middle classes in the Hindus and the Muslims.²⁵

W.C. Smith, in 'An Introductory Essay on Communalism', opined that lop-sided development of Indian economy under the colonial rule and a circumscribed capitalism produced the conditions under which communalism or some parallel form of group discord flourished. He argues, "Communalism would not have proved so effective a divisive force had the Muslims and Hindu sections of the classes concerned, been at the same economic level."²⁶ The capitalistic economic system gave rise to fear, distrust, unbalanced emotionalism, aggressiveness and the like on the part of its middle class participants. Thus, these classes 'lonely and frightened in a competitive world' were driven to seek security in their groups. So the groups were started seen as 'nations' to protect economic interests.

22. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, London, 1936 (Eleventh Impression, 1997), p.138.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

24. K.B. Krishna, *The Problem of Minorities*, London, 1939, p. 278.

25. R. Palme Dutt, *India Today*, Bombay, 1940.

26. W.C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, New Delhi, 1979 (Reprint from second revised edition of 1946), p. 212.

He further contends that the exploitative nature of colonial economy dragged the commercial and professional middle classes into severe competition for securing their economic interests. Unemployment was rife among the middle classes and anyone who could not secure employment was led to feel that he might have done better if he had some communal backing. Smith concludes thus, "...in an economic system which provides employment for only a fraction of its society the only hope of more position is a communalistic hope."²⁷

A.R. Desai in his work, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, written immediately after the independence applied Marxian approach to study Indian nationalism.²⁸ While writing on communalism he argues that "the professional classes and bourgeoisie developed within the Muslim community later than from the Hindu community. They needed the support of the mass of their community in its struggle against the Hindus for government jobs, and economic interests and trade interests. For that purpose bourgeoisie misdescribed the struggle between the sections of the same classes as communal as those between the Hindu community and the Muslim community.

The masses belonging to the Hindu and the Muslim communities had common political and economic interests. The distribution of seats in the legislative councils and posts in the public services did not affect them. But the communalists misrepresented and even converted economic conflicts between the Muslim tenants and the Hindu landlords as a communal conflict. The landlord-tenant and moneylender-debtor conflicts were misdescribed as communal conflicts.²⁹ Thus, the political and economic struggle between the classes of different communities was given a communal form by the communalists.

Bipan Chandra has produced a meticulous study on the emergence of 'Communalism in Modern India'. He traces the growth of communal ideology and politics to the social framework provided by the colonial economy and polity. He holds the view that "Communalism is the belief that because a group of people follow a particular religion they have, as a result, common social, political and economic interests."³⁰ He further argues that communal ideology rests on the notion that in a multi religious society the interests of the followers of the one religion are not just dissimilar and divergent from the interests of the followers of another religion but also mutually incompatible, antagonistic and hostile.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 217.

28. A. R. Desai, *Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, Bombay, 1948.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 407-08.

30. Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India*, New Delhi, 1984, p.1.

Bipan Chandra maintains that communalism is a modern phenomenon. He argues "communalism emerged as a consequence of the emergence of modern politics, which marked a sharp break with the politics of pre-1857 period. Communalism...could emerge as politics and as ideology only after a structural break had occurred in the nature of politics, that is, after politics based on the people, politics of popular sovereignty, politics of popular participation and mobilization, politics based on the creation and mobilization of public opinion had been introduced...the social roots of communalism as also its social, economic and political objectives were modern, in the present and of the present"³¹, he puts emphatically.

Bipan Chandra further argues that communal consciousness arose as a result of the transformation of Indian society under the impact of colonialism and the need to struggle against it. He argues, "In the absence of the development of modern industries and modern social and cultural services, there existed extremely poor and worsening economic opportunities and increasing unemployment, especially for the educated middle and lower middle classes who could not fall back on land and who found government jobs to be getting scarce."³² According to him, economic stagnation produced an intense competition among individuals for government jobs, in professions like law and medicine and in business for customers and markets. In this world of intense competition middle class individuals gave their struggle a wider base by using group identities such as caste, province and religion to enhance their capacity to compete.

Some other scholars have also viewed communalism from similar perspective. P.C Joshi, while discussing the causes that led to communalism utilizes the model of 'Cumulative Causation.' For the Indian Muslims, British colonial impact led to a set back in the economic and political spheres. This engendered in them the feeling of deprivation, which ultimately prepared the ground for secessionist demands.³³ Asghar Ali Engineer has written extensively on communalism and communal riots. On the whole, he too views the subject from the same perspective.³⁴

A new stream in historical writing was represented in the work of the historians called 'Subaltern Studies' group. These scholars have attempted to

31. *Ibid.*, pp.8-9.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

33. P. C. Joshi, 'Economic Background of Communalism in India – A Model of Analysis', in B. R. Nanda (ed.), *Essays in Modern Indian History*, Delhi, 1980, pp.172-73.

34. Asghar Ali Engineer, 'Socio-Economic Basis of Communalism', in *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. VIII, No. 1, January-June, 1984, p.54.

transcend both the colonial and the nationalist frames of history writing and to delineate the autonomous realm of a people in a colonized country, who are seen as having acted on their own impulse. Writing on communalism Gyanendra Pandey in his work *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, argues that it was 'constructed' by the colonial officers who were prone to describe any outbreak of violent activity as a communal riot. He further argues, "The dominant strand in colonialist historiography was representing religious bigotry and conflict between people of different religious persuasions as one of the more distinctive features of Indian society."³⁵ Pandey has shown how colonial narratives about communal riots created a timeless image of Hindus and Muslims locked in perennial, irrational conflict.

35. Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India*, New Delhi, 1990, p. 23.

CHAMBER OF PRINCES AND INDIAN STATES COMMITTEE: THEIR ORIGIN AND CONTRIBUTION TO CROWN/STATES RELATIONSHIP IN INDIA

*Roopam Jasmeet Kaur**

The third decade of the twentieth century saw a turning point in Indian politics. It was quite a notable decade of eminence, as far as the relationship of the Indian Princely States with the British Crown is concerned. These years witnessed the foundation and rise of Chamber of Princes, Constitution of Indian States Committee and Report presented by it, arrival of Simon Commission in India and first Round Table Conference of 1929. There are numerous works throwing ample light on 'British Paramountcy in India' or say 'the States/Crown Relationship'. While studying the relationship between the two for a period as long as almost two centuries, it takes away from us the opportunity and privilege to understand important historical events in a deeper and clearer way. The need is to understand these events, their nature and consequences in their own individuality, obviously not ignoring their cause and effect relationships with other events in history.

In the present paper, a humble attempt is being made to understand, examine and reinterpret two remarkable events in the history of India. These were the foundation and rise of the Chamber of Princes and the appointment of Indian States Committee. Here the emphasis will be on the mutual relationship between these two and how one affected the other and vice versa.

Nature has made India a more or less self-sufficing unit. But historical events have divided her into a large number of separate political entities. Physically, economically and culturally, India is one; politically she is a congeries of large and small states.¹ In those times, India was basically divided into two parts² – British India and Indian India. British India was administered more or

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1. Gurmukh Nihal Singh, *Indian States and British India: Their Future Relations*, Benaras, 1930, pp. 1-4.
2. Politically, India was divided into four unequal parts – the British, the Indian, the French and the Portuguese. However, the French and the Portuguese possessions taken together covered a total area of 1,834 square miles and contained a population less than 9,00,000 people. They thus formed an insignificant portion of India in 1920's, not much bothered about by either British or Indians.

less uniformly under one law. It was under the direct control of the British. The other was the Indian States. These States were administered by Indian potentates with varying degrees of autonomy and without any regard to uniformity.³

Each State was separately administered and had no connection with the administration of other ones. Their mutual relations were not regulated by them but by the paramount power. They had no government body to decide and administer common matters. It was only recently in twentieth century that Indian Princes gained the right of meeting together to discuss matters of common concern and to take concerted action for the redress of common grievances. Truly reflecting their reality, there was not even a semblance of union between them. Infact, there was nothing common between them except that they were all autocratically governed by Indian potentates or princes and that they were not sovereign but under the British.⁴

The stress and strain contingent upon the rising tide of Indian nationalism made the British seriously to toy with the idea of using the Princes to subvert the aspirations of the nationalists. The display of loyalty, the invaluable service rendered by them in suppressing the revolt of 1857 and during the First World War, further lent support to this idea.⁵

In 1918, when Montague, the Secretary of States for India, visited India, the Princes complained to him of Government's interference in the internal affairs of the States. They also demanded for the establishment of a Council of Princes with specified functions and powers.⁶ The Montague-Chelmsford report, published on 8 July 1918, paid glowing tribute to the Princes for their invaluable help during the war.⁷ It admitted that a re-examination of the whole position of relationship between the British Government and the Indian States was essential. It assured the rulers that their dignity, rights and privileges would not be allowed to be impaired by the constitutional changes. The report favoured the Council of Princes as a permanent consultative body, headed by the Viceroy. In his absence, it was to be headed by a representative from among the Princes through voting. The Council was to meet once a year and its agenda was to be approved by the Viceroy.⁸ By November 1919, all the

3. Gurmukh Nihal Singh, *op.cit.*, pp. 1-4.

4. *White paper on Indian states*, Ministry of States, Government of India, New Delhi, 1950, pp. 1-16.

5. S.M. Verma, *Chamber of Princes (1921-1947)*, New Delhi, 1990, p. x.

6. *Outline of the Scheme Concerning the Ruling Princes and the Indian States*, Bikaner, 1918, p. 11.

7. K.M. Panikkar, *The Indian Princes in Council*, London, 1936, p. 3.

8. *East India : Report on the Indian Constitutional Reforms*, London, 1918, p. 244.

details of the Council of Princes had been settled and the Princes got the assurance that next year they would be meeting not in a conference of Princes but in a regular session of the Chamber of Princes.

Under the smokescreen of bringing together Indian India and British India, the British organized Chamber of Princes on 8th February, 1921. Its inception promoted joint action on the part of Indian States and brought them closer to the Political Department of the Government of India.⁹ When the Council was organized, there was a tacit belief in the British mind that it would serve to checkmate any adventurism on the part of the racial nationalists.¹⁰ The establishment of the Chamber did not affect the individual relations between any State and the Crown, but it involved a deviation from the earlier policy under which the Crown discouraged joint action and deliberation between the Indian States.¹¹

The formation of this new body had other important consequences too. So far as the Indian questions had been a triangular one involving the British, the Indian Nationalists and the Muslim Communalists. From now onwards another dimension was introduced into the conflict and with the involvement of the Indian States, it became quadrangular. It was this quadrangular situation which we encounter at the Round Table Conference in the early 1930's and in the Government of India Act of 1935.¹²

By creating the Chamber of Princes, British had hoped to make the rulers more responsive to the changing political realities of the sub-continent and to integrate the States more fully into an All-India polity. But at this time, the main preoccupation of the Princes was to obtain a definition of Paramountcy: a catalogue on their rights and obligations. More importantly they wanted to know the limitations of the Paramount Power.¹³

Reading (1921-1926) took his time in replying, but his answer was a clear declaration of just how illimitable the British considered their Paramountcy to be. He claimed that the sovereignty of the British Crown was Supreme in India. Therefore no ruler of any Indian State could justifiably claim to negotiate with the British Government on an equal footing.¹⁴

In the meantime, the Princes with the help of their experts prepared an 'aide-memoire'.¹⁵ The Princes, fearful about their future, desired that ways

9. *White paper on Indian states*, Ministry of States, Government of India, pp. 22-23.

10. S.M. Verma, *op.cit.*, p. x.

11. S.R. Mehrotra, *Towards India's Freedom and Partition*, New Delhi, 1979, p. 56.

12. *White paper on Indian states*, Ministry of States, Government of India, pp. 22-23.

13. Adrian Sever, *Documents and Speeches on Indian Princely States*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1985, p. 39.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

15. B/26, case No. IV (A) 13, 1927, p. 85.

should be found for safeguarding their position in respect of the internal autonomy of the States and the economic and fiscal interests of the States which had been adversely affected in the past few years.¹⁶

Their wishes were partially satisfied with the dispatch of the Indian States Committee in 1928. The Committee's brief was to report on the existing constitutional position only, and it was debarred from considering any new initiatives.¹⁷ The Earl of Birkenhead, the Secretary of State, gave the following as the terms of reference of the Committee:¹⁸

- a. To report upon the relationship between the paramount power and the Indian States with particular reference to the rights and obligations arising from:
 1. Treaties, Engagements and *Sanads*,
 2. Usage, Sufferance and other causes.
- b. To enquire into the financial and economic reasons between British India and the States and to make any recommendations that the Committee may consider desirable or necessary for their more satisfactory adjustment.

The Committee arrived in Delhi on 14 January 1928.¹⁹ It was a three men team to investigate the relationship between the Paramount Power and the Indian States. The members were Sir Harcourt Butler (Chairman), Sir Sidney Peel and Professor W.S. Holsworth. The Committee visited Patiala on 29 January 1928. Sir Harcourt Butler said to the Maharaja of Patiala, "I cannot conceive the existence of an India without Indian States".²⁰ The Princes also did not let the grass grow under their feet. They got busy to prepare their cases for presentation to the Committee. The Maharaja of Patiala convened a meeting of the Simla Hill Chiefs at Patiala, in which their representatives discussed individually their cases with Leslie Scott.²¹

As the Chancellor of the Chamber, Maharaja of Patiala placed the services of Prof. Rushbrook Williams at the disposal of the Special Organization which had been set up in London to collect materials and prepare the Princes' case. He took Leslie Scott around a number of States. The Committee visited sixteen of the Princely States in India. They visited Bikaner, Navanagar, Baroda,

16. S.M. Verma, *op.cit.*, pp. 116-132.

17. Adrian Sever, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

18. *Report of the Indian States Committee*, Delhi, 1929, p. 5.

19. B/26, Case No. IV (A) 13, 1928, p. 24.

20. B/26, Case No. IV(A) 13, 1927-28, p. 223.

21. *The British Crown and the Indian States*, A report prepared by the Special Organization of the Chamber of Princes on behalf of the Standing Committee, London, 1929, pp. 53-54.

Kashmir and other places where the representatives of the smaller states were afforded an opportunity to meet in groups the legal luminary to discuss their problems.²²

The bulk of the Committee's work in hearing the case for the rulers was done in London.²³ The rulers had engaged eminent British constitutional lawyers headed by Sir Leslie Scott to argue their case. Leslie Scott's crowning achievement lay in evolving a new theory. He argued that 'the Paramount Power is the British Crown and no one else. It is to that the States have entrusted their foreign relations, their external and internal security.'²⁴ He concluded that the obligations and the duties which the States and the Paramount Power had undertaken, require mutual faith and trust and entailed a close and constant intercourse between the parties. Therefore the States could not be compelled to transfer to a third-party their loyalty to the British Crown.²⁵

The Committee, however, found it impossible to evolve a formula which would cover the exercise of Paramountcy. It disagreed with the new theory of Paramountcy advocated by Leslie Scott and remarked:²⁶

The relationship of Paramount Power with the States is not merely a contractual relationship, resting on treaties, made more than a century ago. It is a growing, living relationship shaped by circumstances ... resting on a mixture of history, theory and modern fact. It is not historically correct to say that, when States came in contact with the British Crown, they were independent. None of the States had an international status. Nearly, all of these were subordinate or tributary to the Mughal Empire, the Marhatta Confederacy or the Sikh Kingdom and were dependent on them.

The Princes were demanding that without their own agreement the rights and obligations of the Paramount Power should not be assigned to any third party. For instance, an Indian Government in British India is responsible to an Indian legislature.²⁷ In context to this, the Committee observed that the Indian States should not be transferred without their own agreement to a relationship with a new Government in British India responsible to an Indian

22. B/28, case No. IV (A) 30, 1928, p. 13.

23. *Foreign Political Department*, File No. 84-R, 1928.

24. V.P. Menon, *The Story of Integration of the Princely States*, Madras, 1961, pp. 22-23.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Report of the Indian States Committee*, p. 23.

27. Adrian Sever, *op.cit.*, pp. 441-453.

Legislature.²⁸

The Report established that there was a practical necessity to recognize the existence of two India's and to adopt the administrative machinery to that condition. It advised that the Viceroy, and not the Governor-General in council, should be the agent of the Crown in all dealings with the Indian States. It also recommended that the political officers should be from the British Universities, not from army or political services.²⁹ The implication of this change, at least in history was that the grievances of an Indian State would not go before the Governor Generals Council, which had three Indian members in it. Under the designation of the Viceroy, the Governor General alone would dispose off the claims of the States. It would have the effect of making the Governor General vis-a-vis the States more autocratic in practice as he could proceed without consulting his Executive Council.

Thus was laid the foundation of a policy whereby in later years, a wedge was to be effectively driven between the States and the British India.³⁰ Nationalist opinion in the country viewed the recommendations of the Buttler Committee with grave apprehension. An emphatic protest was entered in the report of the Nehru Committee.³¹ The report stressed the historical, religious, sociological and economic affinities between the British India and the States and uttered the warning:³²

"It is inconceivable that the people of the States, who are fixed by the same ambitions and aspirations as the people of the British India, will quietly submit to existing conditions for ever... the people of British India bound by the closest ties of family, race and religion to their brethren on the other side of an imaginary line will never make common cause with them".

The report of the Indian States Committee was equated to a Chinese wall in the way of India's progress toward dominion status.³³ On a careful analysis of the Report, it appeared that the Indian States Committee had come down on the Princes side on four important points:³⁴

28. *Report of the Indian States Committee*, p. 32.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-39.

30. V.P. Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 23.

31. Nehru Committee was appointed in by All Parties Conference for India. It was presided by Pt. Motilal Nehru.

32. V.P. Menon, *op.cit.*, p. 24.

33. Tej Bahadur Sapru, *Comment on Report of Indian States Committee*, Allahabad, 1929, p. 3.

34. B/26, IV (A) 12, 1929, Vol. II, pp. 191-193; S.M. Verma, *op.cit.*, pp. 129-130.

(i) It accepted the Princes' contention that the relationship of the states was with the crown and not with the Government of India (para 38).

(ii) It admitted that each state was in a separate and individual relationship with the Crown. The relationship was based upon its treaties and engagements and that these treaties and engagements were as binding upon the Crown as upon the States (para 38).

(iii) It accepted the contention of the Princes that the Crown had no right to divest itself of this relationship and could not transfer its rights and obligation in respect of the States to any future Government of India responsible to a popularly elected legislature (para 42).

(iv) It stated categorically that the Paramount Power was not justified in interposing its authority to secure economic results which were beneficial only or mainly to British India in cases the economic interests of British India and the States were in conflict (Para 55).

The rulers were, at the same time, disappointed with the findings of the Buttler Committee with regard to their hope of being free from the unfettered discretion of the Political Department to intervene in their internal affairs.³⁵

The Princes were disillusioned especially by its failure to define Paramountcy. Despite this, they had scored a major victory with the official admission of a direct relationship between the States and the Crown—an admission made not only in the Buttler Report, but by the Government of India itself.

Thus it can be concluded, that the Indian States Committee set a stage for future tug of war for power and existence between the Nationalists and the Indian Princes. The decade of 1920's was not unique in the sense that nothing remarkable happened before or after it. It was unique in its own individuality and for the fact that it gave a new turn to the events wherefrom we see a long fight for the survival of the fittest in Indian political arena, ending finally in 1947-48 when the final integration of India took place.

35. Adrian Sever, *op.cit.*, p. 41.

THE DOGRA SADAR SABHA AND THE GROWTH OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

*Udham Dass**

The Jammu and Kashmir state enjoys a unique history. Firstly, it was formed as a Princely State at such a time when all other Princely states were losing their identities by their absorption in the British Indian Empire one by one. Secondly, the wave of modern education reached in the State quite later than the other parts of India. One of the most significant results of the modern education was the growth of the socio-political consciousness though in a rudimentary manner among the people of the State towards the end of 19th century. The educated people started asserting them by forming caste associations such as the Mahajan Sabha, the Brahman Sabha, the Anjuman Islamia, the Amar Kshatriya Rajput Sabha, the Singh Sabha etc.¹

It was mainly this consciousness which paved the way for the formation of the Dogra Sadar Sabha in 1904 at Jammu, an organisation claiming itself the representative association of all the people of the State belonging to different regions, religions and linguistic groups.² The objective of the Sabha was to secure the socio-economic and political betterment of the people of the State. The Sabha carried on its programmes in the modern democratic and constitutional ways i.e. by highlighting the grievances and the problems of the people in its meetings, by passing resolutions and by submitting memorandums to the government authorities in which requests were made for their solutions.³ In this way, its strategy is said to be similar to that of the Indian National Congress of the early moderate phase. However, its scope was much less than that of the Congress. The Sabha seems to have several similarities with the constitutional associations formed in British India in the nineteenth century.

The activities of the Sabha were instrumental in the development of the political consciousness among the people of the State mainly due to the

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1. *Census Report of India, 1911*, Kashmir, Part-I, Vol-XX, pp.211-212.

2. Lala Mulkh Raj Saraf, *Riyasat Jammu wa Kashmir ke Pratham Lokpriye Neta—Sher-i-Duggar-Lala Hans Raj Mahajan (1866-1944)* (Dogri), Jammu, 1968, p.14.

3. *Ranbir*, Weekly, Vol.8, 9 January, 1933, p.7.

imbibement of the modern socio-political outlook by the people due to their contact with India.⁴ The Dogra Sadar Sabha played a considerable role in the development of modern political awareness among the people of the State.

The Dogra Sadar Sabha was itself the cause and effect of the growth of the political consciousness in the State. Moreover, its activities contributed towards the political awareness among the people both directly and indirectly. The formation of the Sabha was an effort of the educated elites whose main objective was to safeguard the socio-political and economic interests of the people of the State.⁵ One of the major objectives of the Sabha was the protection of the genuine and hereditary rights of the local inhabitants of the State.⁶ In fact, the administration of the State towards the end of the 19th century was dominated by the outsiders. With the deposition of Maharaja Pratap Singh in 1889 by the British Indian Government, a new State Council was formed to run the State administration under the overall supervision of the British Resident.⁷ The Council in order to modernise the administration, recruited a large number of outsiders in the state employment due to the non-availability of the qualified and well-educated locals as a result of the absence of the modern education in the State.⁸ This policy ultimately led to the growth of the unhealthy domination of the outsiders in the State administration. After establishing their control over the State jobs, various heads of the departments started patronizing their own kiths and kins for employment on various posts. In this way, the outsiders established their monopoly or dominance over employment which made the local qualified candidates difficult to get the govt. jobs in their own State.⁹ This not only led to the discrimination with the locals or *Mulkies* but also led to the influx of the outsiders in large numbers which made the condition for the local miserable.

The growth of modern education made the local qualified and competent enough to be recruited on the various government posts but due to the domination of the outsiders, they were denied the employment. Therefore, it was quite natural that a feeling of discontentment and resentment started

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4. Nirmal Singh, *International Relations in the Jammu and Kashmir State (1885-1931)*, Jay Kay Publishing House, Jammu, 1991, p.15.
 5. File No. 254/P-12 of 1912, Old English Records Files, State Archives Repository, Jammu (SARJ).
 6. File No. 774 of 1977 (V.S.) Vernacular Records Files, SARJ.
 7. F.M. Husnain, *British Policy towards Kashmir (1846-1921)*, New Delhi, 1974, p. 80.
 8. File No. 23 of 1902, His Highness Private Records File, SARJ.
 9. Ravinderjit Kaur, *Political Awakening in Kashmir*, New Delhi, 1996, pp.27-28.

smouldering among the locals against the domination of the outsiders in the state employment.¹⁰

The Dogra Sadar Sabha launched a vigorous campaign for safeguarding the rights of the people of the state. This, later on, acquired the shape of a movement known as the *State-Subject movement*.¹¹ The Sabha passed resolutions in its meetings and conferences and used to send representations, deputations and memorandums in the form of petitions to the higher authorities and ministers against this exploitation.¹² It pursued its programmes in a democratic and constitutional way and it is worthful to mention here that this was the first experimentation of raising demands in such a manner in the State.

The Dogra Sadar Sabha came to realize that the real cause of the domination of the outsiders was their superior education and the main cause for the backwardness of the local people was the prevalence of mass illiteracy and the lack of the technical skills among them.¹³ Henceforth the Sabha started a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, it continued its tirade against the discrimination with the locals and on the other, it raised demands for the spread of modern education among the people. It requested the authorities many time and again to open new schools throughout the State.¹⁴

The activities of the Sabha not only brought about a great deal of political awareness among the people but also resulted in the growth of the modern education in the State. It also made the government to open new schools, colleges and technical institutes in the State.¹⁵ The efforts of the Sabha ultimately bore fruits when the State Subject Definition was introduced in 1927 which made it mandatory to prefer the local qualified candidates over the outsiders.¹⁶ It banned the outsiders to acquire land and property in the State and ended the further influx of the outsiders in the State.¹⁷ The significance of the movement launched by the Dogra Sadar Sabha is that the Sabha successfully achieved its motive through constitutional and democratic methods.

10. File No. 21/F-219 of 1910, O.E.R. Files, SARJ.

11. *Ranbir Weekly*, Urdu Newspaper, Jammu, Vol-I, 10 Feb. 1925, p.20.

12. File No. 214 of 1923, General Records Files, SARJ.

13. *Ranbir Weekly*, Jammu, Vol.1, p.2.

14. File No. 214 of 1923, G.R.F., SARJ.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *The Govt. Gazette*, J&K Govt., 2nd May 1927, No.7, Vol.39., p.4.

17. *Ranbir Weekly*, 28 April 1927, p.25.

The Dogra Sadar Sabha in order to popularise its activities, started a monthly journal, the *Dogra Gazette* in urdu in 1906.¹⁸ Its objective was to promote, popularise and educate the people about its programmes. The journal acted as an official mouthpiece of the Sabha and inculcated political and socio-political consciousness among the people. It not only popularised the programmes of the Sabha but also made a favourable condition for social reforms by denouncing the prevalent social evils in the society.¹⁹ In this way, the Sabha acted as the initiator of the press movement in the State.

The Sabha, from time to time, made a strong case for the liberation of press and platform which was facing restrictions at that time.²⁰ By 1920's a drive was intensified against the anti-press policy of the government. The Dogra Sadar Sabha realizing the need of a newspaper in the State encouraged one of its members, Lala Mulkh Raj Saraf to start a newspaper in the State. Lala Mulkh Raj Saraf is known as the father of journalism in the State of Jammu & Kashmir.²¹ Due to his continuous efforts, the state administration granted him permission to start a paper in 1924.

As a result, the first issue of an Urdu weekly *Ranbir* appeared on June 24, 1924 from Jammu.²² The *Ranbir* paper did a commendable job by popularizing the programmes of the Dogra Sadar Sabha and brought about a great deal of social and political awareness among the people. The *Ranbir* was later on converted into a daily newspaper due to its increasing popularity among the people.²³

Equally commendable is the role of the Dogra Sadar Sabha played in the political activities. At the beginning, the Sabha asserted its loyalty to the Maharaja and tried to act as a bridge between the people and the government. Its purpose was to highlight the popular grievances before the authorities to get their redressal in the constitutional and democratic ways.²⁴ The founders of the Sabha were inspired by the methodology of the Indian National Congress. They claimed the Sabha to be a representative organisation of the people of the State. The Sabha kept itself aloof from the political activities in its initial stage.²⁵ However, the national movement in India under the auspices of the

18. File No. 51/5-21 of 1906, OER Files, SARJ.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Ravinderjit Kaur, *op.cit.*, p.35.

21. Lala Mulkh Raj Saraf, *Insaniyat Abhi Zinda Hai* (Hindi), Jammu, 1976, p.5.

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Modern Jammu and Kashmir State (1925-1942)*, Ranbir Press, 1944, p.4.

24. File No. 62/G-42 of 1916, O.E.R Files, SARJ.

25. File No. 242/P-38 of 1912, O.E.R Files, SARJ.

Indian National Congress entered a new and decisive phase in 1920 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The Dogra Sadar Sabha did not remain uninfluenced by it and started associating itself with the programmes of the Non-cooperation Movement.²⁶ It marked a new phase in its activities. Some of the prominent Sabha members participated actively in the movement. Prominent among them were Lala Hans Raj Mahajan, Pandit Rup Krishan, Krishan Lal and Asadullah Shah. They collected subscriptions for Tilak Swaraj Fund which was constituted by the Congress to collect an amount of one crore of rupees from the various parts of India.²⁷ The State Government got annoyed by the active participation of the Sabha in the movement. In October 1921, the Chief Minister issued a strict warning to the Sabha members to not to associate themselves with the Congress movement.²⁸ Henceforth, the Sabha started taking more interest in the constructive programmes of the Congress as laid down by Mahatma Gandhi. It launched a movement to popularise the use of *swadeshi* products among the people of the State.²⁹

The Sabha members not only advocated the use of *Swadeshi* among the people but themselves set an example by wearing the *Khaddar* clothes.³⁰ Sardar Budh Singh and Lala Hans Raj Mahajan, the two prominent members of the Sabha promoted the use of *Swadeshi* goods and clothes.³¹ In order to popularize *Khaddar*, Lala Hans Raj Mahajan established two workshops (*karkhanas*) at Purani Mandi for making and dying *Khaddar* clothes.³² This was an important step taken by the Sabha to prevail upon the people to not to use foreign goods and clothes. In addition, the Sabha petitioned before the government to patronise and thereby promote the *Khadi* and other domestic handicrafts to make the State economically self sufficient.³³

In May 1930, the Sabha organised a successful strike in Jammu to protest against the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi in connection with the launching of civil disobedience movement in India.³⁴ The strike was observed in response to the call given by the Congress throughout the country. The people of Jammu

26. File No. 180/C-30 of 1921, O.E.R. Files, SARJ.

27. *Ibid.*

28. C.M. to H.M. dated 03-10-1921, File No. 180/c-30 of 1921.

29. Lala M.R. Saraf, *op.cit.*, pp. 45-46.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ranbir*, Weekly, Vol. I, 3 Feb. 1925, p. 10.

34. M.R. Saraf, *op.cit.*, p.46.

under the leadership of the Sabha members collected a large heap of the foreign clothes and put them to ablaze.³⁵ The State Government did not like its activities and the Sabha was banned by issuing an order on 9 May 1930.³⁶ The ban was removed in October 1931.³⁷ Thus the Sabha was instrumental in bringing political consciousness among the people of the State by actively involving itself in the national movement.

The Dogra Sadar Sabha also launched an aggressive propaganda against the obsolete social evils and made a strong ground for social reform movement in the State.³⁸ It strongly criticised the various social evils and thus making a favourable atmosphere for social reforms. The social reforms also brought about a new awareness among the people. The Sabha continued raising its voice for the introduction of modern political and democratic institutions of representative type in the State³⁹ which also made another reason for the development of awareness among the people.

In short it can be said that the Dogra Sadar Sabha was the first organisation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir which pursued its objectives in a democratic way. Its activities created political awareness among the people and made them to realize the fact that the popular demands could be raised and highlighted effectively through the modern democratic and constitutional manner. The contribution of the Sabha can be gauged from the fact that it electrified the political atmosphere in the State and did a spade for the further development of political and democratic institutions in the State. Its activities made the people of the State to realize the effectiveness of constitutional methods for getting their grievances redressed and imparted them much needed political education.

35. *Ibid.*

36. File No. 1202/P-17 of 1930., Pol. Deptt. Files, Order No. 43C of 10.5.1930.

37. Telegram No. 687, dated 5-10-1931, P.M. to Governor Jammu, File No. 327/27, p. 5 of 1931, PM to Deptt. Files, SARJ.

38. *Ranbir Weekly*, Vol. 8, 9 January 1933, p.8.

39. *The Dogra Gazette*, Jammu, 5 Dec. 1935, p.4.

INTER COMMUNAL FEUD AND FRICTION IN COLONIAL PUNJAB (1924-1926)

*Dharamjit Singh**

The greatest set back to the progress of India came from within the country in the form of communal feud and friction which erupted in the shape of the most horrid Hindu-Muslim riots which in the 1920's dashed to pieces all hopes of her realising the rising nationalistic aspirations. Mahatma Gandhi's endeavour to establish Hindu-Muslim unity on sound and solid footing through Khilafat and Non Cooperation Movement did not result to have any slightest effect. As soon as the Khilafat and Non Cooperation Movement died down, there was a recurrence of the old feuds between the Hindus and Muslims. At the back of it lay the old Muslim policy of deriving communal or personal advantages of cooperating with the Government against the Hindus. The revival of old communal spirit resulted in discords over petty issues, such as, playing of music before mosque, cutting down the branches of *pipal* tree, killing of cows in public places during *Eid* ceremony, false rumours by mischief mongers, proselytisation activities, religious intolerance, antagonism of religious superiority, communal & communitarian instinct, the defilement of religious symbols and institutions, the different traditions and interests, psychological fear of overshadowing the interest by another community, colonial policy of pampering one community against another, Fazl-I-Husain's biased and pan sectarian policy and economic underdevelopment of the Muslim community. The Arya Samajist's and Hindu Mahasabha's Shuddhi and Sangathan movements and the Muslim counter movements in the form of Tabligh and Tanzim movements degenerated into the filthiest propagandism.¹ Vernacular papers cropped up like mushrooms simply to indulge into the most unbridled license in ridiculing the religion and social customs of the opposite community and

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1. Naripendra Nath Mitra, ed., *The Indian Annual Register, July-December, 1923* (Calcutta, 1924), II, p.25. Hereafter cited as *IAR*; See also : R.C. Majumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People Struggle for Freedom* (Bombay, 1964), p.424. Hereafter cited as R.C. Majumdar, *Struggle for Freedom*; Azim Hussain, *Fazl-I-Hussain—A Political Biography* (Calcutta, 1946), p.384; Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement* (Delhi, 1982), p.193.

they were sold like hot cakes. The masses of India had their worst passion pandered to, as it gave a profitable enjoyment to the vulgar scribes. The result was seen in the form of communal friction and feuds sprang up into the most atrocious riots in 1923 and continued to vitiate the communal harmony of Punjab for a number of years, which finally brought almost entire Northern India within its vortex. The eruption of communal poison served as an eye opener and changed the whole course of development of Indian polity.²

1920's was the most crucial period in communal development where communal violence became a part of everyday's life. The figure of 4740 riots in the Punjab between 1922 to 1927 was shocking. In the period under study (1924-1926) triangular conflict among the three principal communities of the Punjab, the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs surfaced. The deep inter-communal and intra-communal cleavages in the Punjab made it impossible for the emergence of any leader, whether religious or political to carry the masses with him. Even Lajpat Rai, a leader of national repute, was unable to carry the Punjab with him. His influence in the Punjab was partly confined among the Arya Samaj particularly with the progressive section.³ The hostility of the Sikhs and Hindus was reflected from the pamphlet titled, "*Hum Hindu Nahin Hai*" by Kahan Singh in the later half of 19th century. The Sikh and Muslim relations deterioration had witnessed the Sikhs' genocide at the hands of intolerant bigoted Muslim rulers. The Gurdwara legislation of 1922 was passed in the legislative council, in spite of vehement opposition from the Hindu & Sikh members, because the Muslims voted as a block with the Government. The Muslims voted with the Government as a solid block not because they had anything to gain by the passing of the Act but rather they thought that the support of the Government would enable them to extract greater communal concessions in the municipalities, district boards and Government services.⁴ The colonial government's pampering the Muslims through separate electorates enshrined in the Act of 1909 and 1919 further aggravated their communal lust with a view to have good bloc of seats in the legislature. Communal proclivity

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2. *Ibid.*; See also: Khushwant Singh, *A History of Sikhs*, Vol.2:1839-2004, Second Edition (Oxford, 2004), p.265; Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947* (New Delhi, 1988), p.75.
 3. Prem Ram Uprety, *Religion and Politics in the Punjab in the 1920's* (New Delhi, 1980), pp.2,7. Hereafter cited as Uprety, *Religion and Politics in the Punjab in the 1920's*; See also : Kirpal Singh, *The Partition of the Punjab* (Patiala, 1989), p.9. Hereafter cited as Kirpal Singh, *The Partition of the Punjab*; Azim Hussain, *Fazl-I-Hussain—A Political Biography* (Calcutta, 1946), pp.384-385.
 4. *Ibid.*, pp.13, 27-28.

was a virus which vaccinated all the ongoing political course of action in Punjab.

Early in 1923, there were serious communal clashes in Multan and Amritsar. One of the worst communal riots broke out in Calcutta in May 1923 which arose out of an Arya Samajist procession on playing music while passing before a mosque.⁵ In June 1924, there was appreciable increase in tension between Hindus and Mohammedans, particularly in Lahore. Maulana Mohammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali were deeply annoyed on the activities of Hindu Mahasabha and Shuddhi and Sangathan movements and put poison into the ears of Mahatma Gandhi who in his article on communal strife published in *Young India* on 27th May, 1924 put blame on Arya Samaj's proselytising activities.⁶ Arya Samajists eventually became agitated on Gandhi's uncharitable remarks. The admonition of Mahatma Gandhi to the Arya Samajists and the approval which Mohammedans in public meetings had given them aroused very keen resentment among Arya Samajists. The appearance of a pamphlet holding the Prophet up to ridicule likewise aroused ill feeling amongst Mohammedans; and in sections of the press of both communities considerable acrimony, accompanied in some cases by gross obscenity, was displayed. On 16th June 1924, some Mohammedan boys, who were said to have insulted an image in one of the Lahore bazars, were set upon by Hindus and were beaten. A riot would have occurred had not the police intervened in time. Eight Mohammedans were slightly hurt and one suffered grievous injuries. The incident was afterwards greatly exaggerated in the press and on the platform.⁷

The District Magistrate of Lahore in July 1924 arranged a timely conference between Hindu and Muslim leaders which relaxed the tension between the two communities for the time being. The atmosphere was still charged with electricity which the disturbances occurred at Delhi would not tend to diminish. There was a riot on July 11, 1924 in Delhi on the Bakr-Id day owing to a false rumour that a Muslim youth was killed and on account of official notice closing an additional route through the Hindu quarters for cows destined for slaughter resultantly killing 8 Hindus and one Muslim and injuring many.⁸ Meanwhile Swami Satya Dev from United Provinces visited Lahore in

5. R.C. Majumdar, *Struggle for Freedom*, p.427.

6. Inder Vidyawachspati, *Arya Samaj Ka Itihas*, Part II (New Delhi, 1957), p.105.

7. Fortnightly Report, 2nd half of June 1924, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, June 1926, Confidential, F.No. 25. Hereafter cited as FNR.

8. FNR, 1st half of July 1924, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, July 1924, Confidential, F.No. 25/1924; See also: *IAR*, 1924, II, p.25; R.C. Majumdar, *Struggle for Freedom*, p.428.

September and advocated more efficient organization on the part of the Hindus. His speech was provocative. Satyapal Kitchlew was trying to push Tanzim (organization of Islam) but without any marked success. Punjab Government reported Home Department of Government of India in September 1924: "What Kitchlew is actually doing is to irritate the Hindus." C.R. Das, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru and Pandit Madan Mohan Malvia asked him to stop the movement.⁹ Tabligh effort was applauded and abetted by the Jamiat-al-Ulama. The Ahmadiya, a Muslim sect headquartered in the Punjab with an active missionary tradition of its own, also cooperated with Tabligh efforts. Communal tension, fanned by the extremist newspapers of both sides gradually rose in Lahore in June 1925. The local Hindu Sabha held a birthday celebration of Sivaji, Maharana Partap and Banda Bairagi. This was the first time that a celebration of this kind in the Punjab was celebrated and though it did not attract attention, but it must be admitted that public tributes to a person like Banda Bairagi, whose sole claim to fame lay in his ruthless butchery of Mohammedans, could scarcely have anything but an irritating effect on the Muslim community who constituted 55% of Punjab population. Towards the end of June 1925, there was a distinct change for the better in the communal situation. The panic, however, was caused among the Hindus of Lahore regarding the alleged kidnapping of children by Pathans in August 1925. However several cases of alleged kidnapping reported or rumoured had on investigation proved to be absolutely false. At this time, a movement was on foot in Lahore by Dr. Satya Pal and other Congress officials to wean the Congress from its present state of acute communalism. Their first step was an endeavour to displace Lala Lajpat Rai from the Presidentship of the Provincial Congress owing to his support of *sangathan*. Lala Lajpat Rai however himself submitted resignation in October 1925 to this controversy as was anticipated.¹⁰

9. FNR, 1st half of September 1924, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, September 1924, Confidential, F.No. 25.

10. FNR, 1st & 2nd half of June 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, June 1925, Confidential, F.No. 112/1925; See also : FNR, 2nd half of August 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, August 1925, Confidential, F.No. 112; See also: FNR, 2nd half of September 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, September 1925, Confidential, F.No. 112 September. FNR, 2nd half of September 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, September 1925, Confidential, F.No. 112*3) 1925 Poll; Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement* (Delhi, 1982), p.193. Muslim, Hindu and Sikh proportion in Punjab population was 55%, 34% and 11% respectively.

Lahore Hazaz Hatta riot case occurred in August 1924 in which the Muslims had suffered a lot. Juridical orders were pronounced in March 1926; most of the accused were Hindus, and were sentenced to fines only. This caused some dissatisfaction among Muslims but there was no excitement. The most serious riot took place in Calcutta in April 1926 over the question of music before mosque caused 44 deaths and 584 injuries, besides looting, burning and desecration of both temples and mosques.¹¹ These riots were responsible for the publication of objectionable articles in several newspapers in the Punjab and as a result warnings were administered to the following:

- 1) The *Partap* (Lahore), under section 505(b), IPC for an article on the special edition of the Calcutta pamphlet Muhammadi in its issue for the 13th April 1926 which was likely to cause public alarm.
- 2) The same paper, under section 108 b, CPC for articles appearing in the issues of the papers for the 1st and 2nd May 1926.
- 3) The *Sudharshan* (Lahore), for an article likely to endanger the public peace which appeared in the issue for the 28th April 1926.
- 4) The *Jat Gazette* (Rohtak), under section 505(c), IPC, for a note published in its issue for the 12th May 1926.¹²

Warnings were issued to the *Parkash* (Lahore) for an article in its issue for the 15th May which was likely to incite Hindus against Muslims and to the *Paigham-I-Sulah* (Lahore) for an article likely to lead to a breach of peace which appeared in its issue for the 26th May.¹³ The *Guru Ghantal*, a Hindu paper, on 7th July 1926 ridiculed the missionary zealouts of Islam who allegedly were termed *Khangis*. It boldly told that Islam would be a guest only for a few days. The Deputy Commissioner, Lahore had warned the editor of the *Guru Ghantal* for an objectionable article, which appeared in its issue of the 10th May. Punjab Government directed the Deputy Commissioner, Lahore to administer warning to the editor of the *Bhisham*, under section 505(C), IPC for an article which appeared in the issue for the 28th May, 1926 and to the editor of the *Ziafat Punch* for the publication of the objectionable articles in its issue for the 3rd and 10th June, 1926. The Deputy Commissioner, Lyallpur, had also administered a severe warning to the editor of the *Syed* for an article

11. R.C. Majumdar, *Struggle for Freedom*, p.434.

12. FNR, 2nd half of May 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, May 1926, Confidential, F.No. 112-IV-26-Poll.

13. FNR, 1st half of June 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, June 1926, Confidential, F.No. 112-IV-26-Poll.; See also: Uprety, *Religion and Politics in the Punjab in the 1920's*, pp.111-112.

objectionable to Hindus, which appeared in its issue for the 30th April 1926.¹⁴ The prosecution of the *Siyasat* (Lahore) under section 153-A IPC was ordered for an article in the issue for the 11th July commenting on the investigation of the cases arising out of the Rawalpindi riots.¹⁵ With the strengthening of communal patterns in Punjab in the 1920s, there occurred a rise in journalistic activities among the different communities, as evidenced by the rapid increase in magazines and newspapers. The total number of newspapers and magazines published in Punjab rose from 328 in 1923 to 390 in 1925. The polemical journalism reached its climax attacking each other's community during the years 1923-1926 when both the communities were engaged in the Shuddhi, Sangathan, Tabligh and Tanzim movements. As the Punjab was the home for communal tensions, the Government was especially alert in proscribing communal literature.¹⁶ The publication of inflammatory material such as *Rangila Rasul* in May 1924 not only reflected communal animosity but contributed to it considerably. Chain of communal riots engendered in urban areas such as Lahore, Amritsar and Rawalpindi where publication took place enormously. The rural areas of Punjab remained largely unaffected by the war of words. The rural regions of Jhelum, Mianwali, Muzaffargarh & Dera Ghazi Khan together produced just two newspapers.¹⁷

Multan, predominantly a Muslim city, inaugurated the new surge of communal violence in the subcontinent, of which Punjab was to remain focal point. Suspicion of stone throwing on the Muslim *Tazia* procession and burning of a mosque of Wali Mohammed alongwith a rumour that a Hindu woman had been molested and her breast torn apart aggravated communal edginess culminated in riots in 1923. *Kutchabandis* or barriers in lanes were erected in the Hindu dominated areas after the Muharram riots in 1923. In January 1924, the Commissioner of Multan proposed that a certain number of these barriers would be demolished and the majority be retained on payment of a sum of Rs.250 per barrier, the proceeds to be expended in compensating the sufferers in the riots. Hindu members of the Multan Municipal Committee had earlier refused to accept the Commissioner's proposals and owing to the Hindu members' attitude, the Mohammedan members of the Committee who were in

14. FNR, 2nd half of June 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, June 1926, Confidential, F.No. 112-IV-26-Poll.

15. FNR, 2nd half of August 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, August 1926, Confidential, F.No. 45.

16. Uprety, *Religion and Politics in the Punjab in the 1920's*, p.84.

17. Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947* (New Delhi, 1988), pp.75-76.

majority, adhered to the former decision of the Committee that all the barriers should be demolished.¹⁸ The *Kutchabandis* were at last demolished in the first half of September 1924.¹⁹ The Calcutta riots also begot some anxiety among the Hindus at Multan, where Hindus had been excited by an anti-Hindu article in a local Mohammedan paper but steps were taken by the authorities to allay this feeling in April 1926. A warning was administered by the Deputy Commissioner, Multan, to the proprietor and editor of the *Tarjuman*, a Muslim organ which was prominent in fomenting communal ill-feeling, in respect of an article on the Rohillanwali praying platform. The paper thereafter stopped publication.²⁰

Panipat town in the Karnal District was having microscopic Hindu minority of 700 amidst a Muslim population of 21000 but surrounded by Jat Hindu villages added to the gravity of Hindu Muslim ill feeling. Rioting broke out in Panipat on 31st July 1923 over the ringing of a gong in a Hindu temple during the evening prayer of the Mohammedans in which twenty-four were injured. The incident resulted in appointing an Arbitration Committee for the settlement of social and religious disputes which however for sometime failed to effect settlement. The position showed improvement in January 1924 when at the request of responsible Hindu and Mohammedan leaders the outstanding riot case was withdrawn. This decision met with the disapproval of certain local Khilafat workers, who organized a meeting to ask for the transfer of the Hindu Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner.²¹

The Bakr-Id festival passed off uneventfully in July 1923 throughout the province, although here and there were hints of friction between the two communities. In this festival, Muslim chose to sacrifice cows instead of lambs or goats and at Panipat, some trouble was caused owing to the unreasonable attitude of several of the local Khilafat firebrands who objected to the measures being taken to prevent kine slaughter in a Hindu quarter of the town. The cow

18. FNR, 2nd half of January 1924, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, January 1924, Confidential, F.No. 25 of 1924 Poll (Jan); See also: Upreti, *Religion and Politics in the Punjab in the 1920's*, p.150.

19. FNR, 1st half of September 1924, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, September 1924, Confidential, F.No. 25.

20. FNR, 2nd half of June 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, June 1926, Confidential, F.No. 45.

21. FNR, 1st half of January 1924, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, January 1924, Confidential, F.No. 25 of 1924 Poll (Jan); See also: FNR, 1st half of August 1923, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, August 1923, Confidential, F.No. 25 & K.W.

was always a serious issue in Panipat. Because of their numerical strength, the Muslims did not hesitate to kill cows and to display the meat in front of the Hindu houses. The Hindus treated the cow sacrosanct. The resultant situation was firmly handled by the authorities and fortunately nothing untoward occurred.²² Then approached Muharram festival but a serious riot was narrowly averted at Panipat during the Muharram procession on 1st August, 1925. A large number of Jats from the surrounding villages armed with *lathis* arrived in the town and in spite of the attempts of the police to prevent them forced the way on to the route of the procession. They were there held up by a small body of police for three hours but as the procession approached and a clash seemed inevitable, the police charged the crowd and succeeded in dispersing it without firing. It was not possible to say how many in the crowd were hurt, but 30 persons were attended to by the medical authorities. There was a fairly big demonstration at the hospital at the time of the inquest. The tension was further aggravated by the publicity, which had been given to the affair in the press by prominent Hindu leaders from outside whose versions of what actually occurred were grossly distorted. About 270 arrests were made by the police. Most of the Hindu shops were closed as a protest against the arrests.²³ The appointment of an European Magistrate to try the riot cases gave general satisfaction. In the second half of August 1925, in the course of a tour in the south eastern districts, the Governor personally visited the town and had lengthy interviews of the deputation of local Hindus and Mohammedans.²⁴ The agitation over the Muharram disturbance however appeared subsiding in September. The Jat leaders took the editor of the *Jat Gazette* to task for making a vitriolic attack on the Mohammedan Deputy Commissioner of Karnal. An ample apology was thereafter published by the newspaper. The proposed *hartal* was also abandoned after the visit of the Governor and business was carried on as usual.²⁵ The European Magistrate convicted all the 29 accused under section 145, Indian Penal Code in February

22. FNR, 1st half of July 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, July 1925, Confidential, F.No.112; See also: Uprety, *Religion and Politics in the Punjab in the 1920's*, p.159; Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol.II:1839-2004, Second Edition (Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1999), p.265.

23. FNR, 1st half of August 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, August 1925, Confidential, F.No.112.

24. FNR, 1st half of August 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, August 1925, Confidential, F.No.112.

25. FNR, 1st half of September 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, September 1925, Confidential, F.No.112, September.

1926. Four *Banias* of Panipat were sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment and two members of the crowd who attacked a police constable to three months' rigorous imprisonment each. Six Jats were sentenced to one month's imprisonment and a fine of Rs.50/-. Ten other Jats were given one month imprisonment. The remainders were released with a warning under section 562 Indian Penal Code. The publication of the judgement resulted in bearing a good effect in alloying communal bitterness in Panipat and neighbourhood.²⁶

In another case of cow slaughter in connection with the Id-ul-Zuha of 1925, the accused were acquitted by the Session Court in May 1926 on the grounds that the regulations framed prohibit the slaughter of kine did not apply to those slaughtered for religious purposes. This decision gave cause for anxiety in connection with the coming Id-ul-Zuha as well, and therefore, an appeal against the order of acquittal was lodged in the High Court. The news of Calcutta riots and the spread of wild rumours from Delhi were other contributory factors for generating friction among the two cardinal communities.²⁷ The Government appeal to the High Court against the Sessions Judge's ruling resulted in reversal of the order. Instructions were then issued for the observance of the regulation which forbid the slaughter of cows in a town except under license and adequate measures were taken for the coming Id-ul-Zuha which was to fall on 21st or 22nd June and a Hindu Bathing festival was also to occur within a day or two of the Id. Hindu mischief makers were again found to be urging Jats to attack it in large numbers and to insist on passing through Panipat town which could again repeat the last year melancholy events.²⁸

The most serious outbreak befell in September 1924 at Kohat in N.W.F.P., a predominantly Muslim area. The trouble arose over the publication of a pamphlet by the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, Kohat, containing a virulently anti-Islamic poem. Hindu-Muslim relations in Kohat had deteriorated for some time due to forced conversions, abduction of women and a dispute over building a bathing tank for Hindu women on a piece of land bordering Mohammedan *mohalla*. The shady aspect of this riot was that not only innocent Hindus

26. FNR, 1st & 2nd half of February 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, February 1926, Confidential, F.No.112 (II) Feb.

27. FNR, 1st half of May 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, May 1926, Confidential, F.No. 112-IV-26-Poll.

28. FNR, 1st half of June 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, June 1926, Confidential, F.No. 45.

were butchered, rather the looting of the Hindu temples, the breaking of the idols and the conversion of the Hindus at the point of sword took place which eventually led to the exodus of 1200 Hindus (almost the entire Hindu population) to Rawalpindi and other parts of the Punjab.²⁹ Some excitement was caused at Rawalpindi in the first half of September by the arrival of Hindu refugees from Kohat but the number of refugees diminished in October.³⁰ Mahatma Gandhi visited Rawalpindi and advised the Hindu refugees from Kohat not to listen to the advice of Government that they should return to their homes. They should only return when the Kohat Muslims come to fetch them. This followed from his conviction that Hindus being in a tiny minority at Kohat could not live in peace amidst hostile Muslim population who were in overwhelming majority.³¹ Gandhi and Shaukat Ali, the Khilafat leader, invited representatives of the Kohat Mohammedans to Rawalpindi to discuss the settlement of outstanding issues but the latter refused the invitation and Gandhi and Shaukat Ali returned to Delhi in disgust.³² Lajpat Rai criticised him (Gandhi) for having delayed his visit to Rawalpindi to solve the problem of Kohat refugees. Mahatma, according to him, should have rushed to Rawalpindi as soon as he heard of the suffering of the Kohat Hindus.³³ Gandhi actually wanted to visit Kohat with a few Muslim and Hindu leaders to restore friendly relations between the two communities, but the Viceroy refused permission. Various efforts were made for a settlement but without success until January 1925, when a reconciliation agreement was signed by the Hindus and Muslims of Kohat.³⁴

29. *IAR*, 1924, II, p.26; See also : Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol.I (1885-1935) (Delhi, 1969), p.275. Hereafter cited as Sitaramayya, *History of Indian National Congress*; Kirpal Singh, *The Partition of the Punjab*, p.9; Upreti, *Religion and Politics in the Punjab in the 1920s*, pp.154,156.

30. FNR, 2nd half of September & October 1924, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, September 1924, Confidential, F.No. 25; See also: *IAR*, 1924, II, p.26.

31. FNR, 1st half of December 1924, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, December 1924, Confidential, F.No. 25/1924; See also: S.L. Malhotra, *Gandhi—An Experiment with Communal Politics* (Chandigarh, 1975), p.62. Hereafter cited as Malhotra, *Gandhi—An Experiment with Communal Politics*.

32. FNR, 1st half of February 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, February 1925, Confidential, F.No. 112; See also: Sitaramayya, *History of Indian National Congress*, p.275.

33. *IAR*, 1924, II, pp.26-27; See also: Kirpal Singh, *The Partition of the Punjab*, p.19; Malhotra, *Gandhi—An Experiment with Communal Politics*, pp.62-63.

34. Sitaramayya, *History of Indian National Congress*, p.276; See also : R.C. Majumdar, *Struggle for Freedom*, pp.429, 433; *IAR*, 1924, II, p.27.

Sikh-Muslim relations were spoiled by a dispute over Shahidganj claimed by the Muslims to be a mosque and by the Sikhs to be a *gurudwara*. Sikhs won their case and demolished remnants of the old mosque causing much heartbreak to the Muslims. Sikh insistence of wearing long *kirpans* further irritated the Muslims psychologically.³⁵ In November 1925, the Sikhs in Rawalpindi refused to give a guarantee not to play music in front of mosques on the occasion of the procession in honour of Guru Nanak's birthday, which soured communal feelings. The Mohammedan and Sikh leaders were eventually brought to terms by the intervention of the District authorities and possible serious trouble was averted.³⁶ A serious communal riot eventuated at Rawalpindi on the night of the 14th June 1926 in the death of eight Mohammedans, the wounding of fourteen Mohammedans and nine Hindus and much damage to the property. The immediate cause of the riot was the taking out of a very large procession by the Singh Sabha on the previous day to celebrate the martyrdom anniversary of Guru Arjan Dev. This procession passed the Jama Masjid with the festivity of music. A few Muslims protested at the time, but owing to the efforts of the police and some local men of position, the procession passed off without incident. Muslim resentment, however, which had been roused by a number of meetings held during the past few weeks to protest against the proposal of certain Sikhs to erect a cinema on the immediate proximity of the Jama Masjid, appeared to have remained unappeased. The criminal atmosphere was already badly charged and cinema-masjid episode caused spark. Towards the last week of May (1926), a series of Muslim meetings took place and in one of them held on May 28, a local pleader, Abdul Rahman allegedly said if the cinema hall was built near the mosque then it would be converted into a liquor shop. The opening of Sikh theatre on June 14 produced hostile demonstrations.³⁷ Rioting with much arson broke out at about 10:30 P.M. on 14th June. There was little general fighting, attacks for the most part being made on isolated individuals. The force at the disposal of the police was small, but prompt and vigorous measures were taken and by 3:30 A.M., on 15th June 1926, the situation was well in

35. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol.2, p.265.

36. FNR, 1st half of November 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, November 1925, Confidential, F.No. 112 (1) Nov.

37. FNR, 1st half of June 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, June 1926, Confidential, F.No. 112-IV of 1926; See also: Uprety, *Religion and Politics in the Punjab in the 1920s*, p.160; *Tribune*, 17th July 1926, p.1; Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947* (New Delhi, 1988), p.77.

hand. The casualties amounted to 16 killed and 72 injured. Of the killed 12 were Mohammedans, 2 Hindus and 2 Sikhs while 43 Mohammedans, 21 Hindus and 9 Sikhs were injured. The total damage to property was extensive. The city was cordoned with troops and on the early morning of 15th June, the Deputy Commissioner issued an order under section 144, CPC, prohibiting the making of speeches, the convening of meetings, the carrying of *lathis* and the assembling of groups of persons in Rawalpindi city. The total number of arrests in regard to riots upto 23rd June was 63, of whom 30 were charged with arson and 17 under section 188, I.P.C.³⁸ The dispute over the erection of cinema soon snowballed as an ailing local newspaper, *Tarjan-I-Sirhid*, whipped up Muslim frenzy in order to boost its sales.³⁹ Affairs of Rawalpindi appeared to be slowly settling down in the first half of August 1926. S.B. Mahtab Singh published a report on the riot on behalf of S.G.P.C. It was fairly moderate in tone but contained some criticism of the police.⁴⁰

Another riot betided in Rawalpindi on 18th November 1926 when the Sikh procession in honour of Guru Nanak's birthday was being conducted. A license had been carefully drawn up laying down timings for the various portions of the route in order to ensure the procession should not pass a mosque during the time of congregational prayer. The conditions of the license were seriously observed by the Sikh community, which throughout showed anxiety to cooperate with the authorities in avoiding trouble. The Muslims, however, were not equally reasonable, and a meeting was held in the Jama Masjid on 14th November at which resolutions were passed to the effect that music at no time be permitted before the Jama Masjid, although it might be tolerated before other mosques except at prayer time, and that all Muslims should assist in giving effect to this decision. The Deputy Commissioner considered that these resolutions amounted to a direct incitement to flout law and authority and attributed to them the fact that stones were thrown at the procession as it passed Jama Masjid from the mosque itself and from the roofs of adjacent houses. Almost 34 arrests were made on the spot. The prompt action of the police who handled an ugly situation with great skill, averted a serious riot. At Gurjar Khan in the Rawalpindi District, the Sikhs

38. FNR, 2nd half of June 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, June 1926, Confidential, F.No. 112-IV of 1926; See also: Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947* (New Delhi, 1988), p.77.

39. Ian Talbot, *Punjab and the Raj 1849-1947* (New Delhi, 1988).

40. FNR, 1st half of August 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, August 1926, Confidential, F.No. 112-IV of 1926.

endeavoured to take out a procession without a license in defiance of orders, but were frustrated by the police, while in Ambala Cantonment the local Sikhs decided not to hold a procession as a protest against being required to apply for a license. Elsewhere processions were held without incident of any kind.⁴¹

Hindus of Amritsar exhibited considerable nervousness at the result of events at Kohat in the second half of September 1924. The tension at one time between the two communities was very high and the slightest incident would have caused a riot. The position became decidedly easier since the prohibition of processions after nightfall and the adoption of other precautionary measures.⁴² Hindu Provincial Conference was held at Amritsar in June 1925 and it was attended by all the leading Hindus of the Province including Lala Lajpat Rai. It was feared that the conference would make matters worse but it produced no direct attacks on the Mohammedans except in regard to Kohat. As a matter of precaution, troops were marched round the city on the first day of the proceedings.⁴³ The Sikhs at the Golden Temple on the occasion of Diwali festival celebrated it with pomp and show. The illuminations and the fireworks used to be one of the great features of the festival. It caused heartburning in the bigot minded Hindus. They then intended to run their own show at the Durgiana Temple. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya visited Amritsar in September 1925 to open the new Durgiana tank.⁴⁴ In February 1926 the Deputy Commissioner Amritsar issued a general warning against inter-communal religious debates. This had the effect of stopping a proposed Arya Samaj-Mussalman debate fixed for 27th February, which was giving rise to consideration friction.⁴⁵ The Governor went down to Lahore on 19th June 1926 to be in close touch with the situation during the Id. He also visited Amritsar and returned to Simla on 24th June 1926. On the night of 20th June 1926, a deserted *gurdwara* at village Mughal, police station Bharakhao, was burnt by Muslims of neighbouring villages. It appeared that the original intention of the culprits was to raid a neighbouring village but that their courage gave

41. FNR, 2nd half of November 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, November 1926, Confidential, F.No. 112-IV.

42. FNR, 2nd half of September 1924, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, September 1924, Confidential, F.No. 25/1924.

43. FNR, 1st half of June 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, June 1925, Confidential, F.No. 112/1925.

44. FNR, 1st half of October 1925, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, October 1925, Confidential, F.No. 112(1) 1925 Poll.

45. FNR, 2nd half of February 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, February 1926, Confidential, F.No. 112 (11) Feb.

way and that they decided to burn the *gurdwara* instead.⁴⁶ Punjab Government directed the Deputy Commissioner, Lyallpur in August 1926 to warn the *Jagrit* for an article on Mohammedans and cow sacrifice, which was calculated to offend Muslims. Deputy Commissioner, Gurdaspur, was requested to warn *Faruq* for an offensive rejoinder. The Deputy Commissioner, Rawalpindi, was asked to convey a warning against provocative writing to the editor, printer and publisher of the *Peshwa* a newly started Hindu communal organ in August 1926. Subsequently, *Jagrit* (Lyallpur) was prosecuted under section 153-A, I.P.C. for giving an offence to Muslims in an article.⁴⁷ The year 1926 ended with a terrible tragedy inspired by communal hatred. Swami Shradhdhananda of Arya Samaj, the architect of Shuddhi movement, was killed by a Muslim with a dagger.⁴⁸

The foregoing narration reflects that at the root of friction and feud in colonial Punjab from 1924-1926 was the mutual distrust which obstructed the success of any settlement between the Hindu & Muslim communities. The publication of irresponsible statements by the misguided and self-styled leaders of different communities, the publication of the pamphlets by mischief mongers, plumbing of popular Punjab journalism, mad race for religious revivalism, grave damage inflicted by Shuddhi and Sangathan movements of Hindus and Tabligh & Tanzim of Muslims fomenting antagonism, retaliatory action by the opposite community, shady flashback of past relations, irresponsible and inhuman deeds executed by followers of both major communities, defiling of religious images, quarrelling of boys of different communities, false rumours of kidnapping, biased policies and preferential treatment of the Muslim Minister Fazl-I-Husain on the name of doing justice with his own community, insistence on cow killing by the Muslims, educational and economic regression of the Muslims and playing of music before the mosques by the Hindus exasperated the existing unkindly relations further between Hindus & Muslims. It may be added that Hindu intransigent to celebrate the anniversaries of some personalities such as Banda Bahadur which could cause irritation to the Muslims and threat to put an end to the religion of the other community were responsible for fomenting communal trouble. The colonial policy was strange. On the one

46. FNR, 2nd half of June 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, June 1926, Confidential, F.No. 45.

47. FNR, 1st & 2nd half of August 1926, Punjab, Home Department, Government of India, August 1926, Confidential, F.No. 45.

48. Inder Vidyawachspati, *Arya Samaj Ka Itihas*, Part II (New Delhi, 1957), p.149; See also: *Tribune*, 17th May 1926, p.4.

hand, the British encouraged communal antagonism by incorporating communal electorates in Indian polity, on the other hand, issuing of orders to march troops to quell communal disturbances, warning to the communal editors, license for laying down the routes for religious processions, prohibition of music at certain times, banning of communal debates etc. were some exemplified measures of the Government to tackle the menace of communal friction and feud. Indeed the atmosphere was so charged and mutual trust was so shaky that even a false rumour of trivial substance could inflame the smouldering fire. Communal violence remained a continued process, which finally culminated in the vivisection of India enabling the Muslims to have a separate homeland. Being student of history and in the light of communal distraction in post independence, one must apply historiographic sense to gauge the communal animosity.

A GLIMPSE ON THE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMME OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE (1939-1947)

*M. Y. Ganai**

The year 1938 is significant in the annals of Kashmir freedom movement. It was in this year that Muslim Conference was converted into National Conference with the avowed purpose of broadening the base of the freedom struggle by facilitating the participation of various communities. So, 1939 onwards the movement was led by the leadership of the new organization till its culmination in the overthrow of colonial regime. The present article would attempt to have a glimpse on the activities and programme of National Conference till 1947.

The All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference met for its first session at Sarnal Anantnag from 30th September to 2nd October, 1939. World War II had started barely a month earlier. S. M. Abdullah was the President designate. In his presidential address he claimed that the new organisation struggled to unite all the poor, exploited, unemployed and all other suffering people of the State with the goal of achieving a responsible Government answerable to the people. He however, pointed out that one should not expect to be able to unite all the members of any community for such an endeavour, for the simple reasons that there were people with vested interests belonging to all communities. It was futile to expect them to cooperate with those carrying on the present struggle. S.M. Abdullah declared that the State of Jammu and Kashmir was only one among 584 princely states in which about eight crore people lived. The struggle of National Conference was a part of the struggle of all these people for a better life. He argued that no force could prevent these eight crore people to achieve the same degree of freedom as had already been achieved by the people of British administered part of the country. S.M. Abdullah informed the audience that state's people's movement was led by All India States' People's Conference headed by Pandit Nehru. The objective of this organisation was that in the future Federal Assembly envisaged by the

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Government of India Act of 1935, it were the representatives of the people who should represent the princely states and not the nominees of the princes.¹

In addition to other issues the Presidential address laid an emphasis on the economic rehabilitation of the State. A need for floating limited liability joint stock companies, export promotion of fruit, dry and fresh, and handicrafts on a larger scale was underlined. It was realized that assistance was needed for the revival of all local handicrafts. In connection with the agricultural sector, emphasis was laid on providing the peasantry with hybrid seeds, fertilisers and assistance in raising livestock and starting large-scale poultry farming. Local communities were instructed to assist the people in avoiding litigation and in settling minor disputes through mediation.²

Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg President of the Reception Committee, in his address emphasised on uniting all the communities under the flag of National Conference. Besides, he made a special reference to the aggressive imperialist war that Hitler had unleashed on the first of September, 1939, and stressed upon the people that in such circumstance their unity was imperative. He also gave a detailed account of the district Anantnag related to poverty, lack of education and health services and the inadequate communication facilities. Mirza Afzal Beg observed that only a responsible Government could be relied upon to take serious steps to attend these problems. Therefore, the achievement of responsible Government was the main goal set by National Conference for itself. He also called for building and strengthening the new organization.³

The second annual session of the National Conference was held at Baramullaha on 27, 28 and 29, September, 1940. Sardar Budh Singh was the President designate. The main political resolutions passed in the session affirmed that "no scheme of responsible Government would be acceptable to the nation in which the tillers of the soil are not allowed to enjoy the fullest fruits of their labour, for this there can be no other way than this viz; those alone should possess and own the land who till it". Concessions were demanded for the tenants to alleviate the prevailing distress and the Conference focused on the existing rural indebtedness. It was demanded that in case a debtor paid back

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1. Presidential address delivered to the 1st annual session of the National Conference by S.M. Abdullah at Sarnal, Anantnag on 2 October, 1939.
 2. N.N. Raina, *Kashmir Politics and Imperialist Manoeuvres*, Srinagar, Kashmir, 1987, p. 114.
 3. Welcome address delivered to the 1st annual session of National Conference by Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg, vide Abdul Rashid Taseer, *Terikh-i-Hurriyat-i-Kashmir*, Vol.2, Mahafiz Publication, Srinagar, 1968, pp. 68-69.

the principal in the form of interest, the debt should be cancelled out. At the same time debtors were promised cancellation of all debts whenever an elected responsible Government would come to power in the State.⁴

The third annual session of National Conference was held on 22, 23, and 24 August, 1941 at Srinagar. This session was also presided over by Sardar Budh Singh. The session was inaugurated by Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan who had been specially invited by S. M. Abdullah. In his brief address the Pathan leader appreciated the political consciousness of the Kashmiris and appealed the people to extend their whole hearted cooperation to S. M. Abdullah. In the capacity of President of Reception Committee, Bakhshi Gulam Muhammad addressed the session wherein he made an appeal to Rajas and Nawabs of princely states for establishing responsible Governments in their respective states. In his Presidential address Sardar Budh Singh reminded the British Government of India its decision of 3rd September, 1939, in which it had declared the participation of Indians in the war without seeking their opinion. He suggested that if it was desirous to seek the wholehearted support and cooperation of Indian people in the war efforts, it should declare independence of India. Such a type of bold decision would only prove all claims of Britain that the war was waged for the sake of democracy. While presenting a critique of the contradictions in British words and deeds, Sardar Budh Singh argued:⁵

At this critical stage when the British dignitaries are not leaving any stone unturned to safeguard the freedom of their own country, are not ready even to give an assurance for the freedom of forty crore Indians. Contrary to it the outstanding leaders of Indian National Congress like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, Rajagopalachari, Sardar Patel and others were put behind the bars. By doing so they provided an opportunity to their rivals to say that they were waging the war of imperialism.

While reacting to the statement of Maharaja Hari Singh that "we are ready to save the freedom and democracy of the world against the onslaught of German Nazism," Sardar Budh Singh said:⁶

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4. Presidential address delivered to the second annual session of National Conference by Sardar Budh Singh at Baramullah, October, 1939.
 5. Presidential address delivered to the third annual session of National Conference by Sardar Budh Singh at Srinagar, August, 1941.
 6. *Ibid.*

The subjects of the princely states did never avail that freedom of which their Nawabs and Maharajas claim to defend across the sea shores by participating in the war and declaring to pay physical and material sacrifices. What is the condition of the states? Once I have told that if India is like a prison, the princely states are its dark cells. There are such taboos and restrictions on the social life which one cannot imagine even in the forests of Africa.

Sardar Budh Singh referred to Maharaja Hari Singh's declarations of 11 February, 1939; 2 September, 1939 and 17 October, 1934, wherein he had promised his subjects the establishment of an Assembly not only for their participation in the Government but to ensure an efficient administration. However, the functioning of that Assembly had exposed these fake claims and assurances. About the hypocritical role of the nominated Assembly Members Sardar Budh Singh observed:⁷

The high hopes raised with the establishment of the Assembly, both by the ruler as well as the ruled were dashed to the ground by the people with vested interests. At many times it happened that the majority of the nominated members took an undue advantage of the minority of the elected members and did not allow to pass any such bill aimed at the welfare of common masses. If any bill related to the reduction of *kah charai* (grazing tax) or the land revenue in backward areas was somehow passed in the lower house, it was amended by the council (upper house) in such a way that it lost its significance.

It was in the beginning of March, 1942, that Japan joined the World War II against the Allied powers. It destroyed the armed power of Britain and after the occupation of Burma it began to knock at the doors of the British Empire in India. Subhash Chander Bose tried to hoist the Indian flag on the historic Red Fort with the aid and assistance of Japanese. All these developments resulted into a blow to the prestige of Britain.

It was in these circumstances that the British Government sent Sir Cripps to Delhi with a mission about the political future of India. The Mission assured the dominion status for India at the end of world war. In connection with its proposals Sir Cripps contacted the political and semi-political parties

7. *Ibid.*

of India. However, the Mission was silent in its policy towards the eight crore population of princely states.

As soon as it became clear that the Mission had ignored the aspirations of the state people, National Conference was activated and contacted Punjab State Praja Mandal, National Conference Hyderabad, National Congress, Mysore and some other organizations and motivated them to persuade the representatives of the Chamber of Princes to establish complete responsible Government in the princely states. The States' People's Conference declared to observe 20 April, 1942, as the *States Demand Day*. On this occasion National Conference called a public meeting at Hazuri Bagh, Srinagar which was presided over by Sardar Budh Singh, the President of National Conference. It was in this mass meeting that the Conference resolved:⁸

The rulers have no right to represent the people of the Indian states and it is exclusively the right of their popular leaders and organizations. It is the duty of the State people to fight against a constitution which discriminates between the State and non-State subjects (people of British India) in their fundamental rights. The people of the states are not bound to such treaties which would tell upon their freedom and progress.

The leaders of the states issued a joint statement in which they declared that the agreements made between the East India Company and the state rulers were not acceptable to eight crore people of the princely states. The statement added that it was the right of people's representatives and not that of the rulers to speak on behalf of the state masses. National Conference did not keep its eyes close to the changing political scenario of India. The Working Committee of the Conference called a meeting on 16th May, 1942, to discuss the national and international situation. In a statement issued to press the Working Committee observed:⁹

The Working Committee regrets deeply the present attitude of the British War Cabinet towards the problems of the people living in princely states. The recent partial step taken by the British Government in the shape of the Cripps scheme in which the downtrodden millions of people living in the Indian states were entirely left out of the picture,

8. Resolution of National Conference passed at a public meeting at Hazoori Bagh, Srinagar, on 20 April, 1942, vide Abdul Rashid Taseer, *op.cit.*, n. 3, Vol. 2, Srinagar, p. 204.

9. Resolution of National Conference Working Committee passed in April, 1942 at Srinagar.

lends support to the state peoples apprehensions that the British Government is not serious about the future of the state masses.

The fourth annual session of National Conference was held on 9, 10, and 11 April, 1943, at Mirpur under the Presidentship of S.M. Abdullah. In 1943 the World War II was at its climax and its destructions had resulted in chaos all over Europe. The participation of Russia in the war on the side of Allied countries had enabled the latter to gain the sympathies of the socialists all over the world. Therefore, the concern for Russia and democratic forces formed important theme of the deliberations of the session. The President exposed the tricks of the British aimed at dividing the Indians in order to prolong their rule. While making an appeal for maintaining peace all over India, S.M. Abdullah observed that some clever people with vested interests were raising the slogans of 'Islam in danger'. According to Abdullah the roots of the problem in India were laid in the economic rather than religious factor. He declared a complete freedom of India as the only solution for all the problems. Without naming Muslim League and its demand for Pakistan, S. M. Abdullah in his Presidential Address argued:¹⁰

In the capacity of a Muslim, I would like to say that it is the obligation of a Muslim belonging to this country to have full faith in being an Indian. India is his homeland; he is born on the Indian soil with which he had to merge lastly. Islam has come to Sindh some thirteen hundred years back whereas in remaining parts of the subcontinent it has the life of six hundred and fifty years. The bodies of our forefathers have merged with Indian soil and today every particle of this soil is carrying our blood. From Kashmir to Raskumari and from Khyber Pass to Nepal there is no region wherein we do not find the Muslim monuments, their localities, their mosques, their shrines and the infallible remnants of their achievements in the field of learning. Either Srirangapatnum or Srinagar both are ours. In these circumstances we cannot surrender any part of the country. Now our rights have become permanent and everlasting on this soil. India is our nation and shall remain so in future. It is our obligation to liberate our nation against the

10. Presidential address delivered to the fourth annual session of the National Conference by S.M. Abdullah at Mirpur, April, 1943.

domination of the foreigners and all of us have to come forward and to take a lead in this connection.

In the concluding part of his address S.M.Abdullah invited all those people and parties aimed at the achievement of responsible Government to join the nationalist movement. He appealed them to stand united in order to disseminate political consciousness and root out the communal hatred. S.M.Abdullah stressed upon the five guiding principles for the leaders and workers of National Conference:¹¹

- (a) to organize National Conference in the length and breadth of the State, (b) to obtain deliverance from the British rule, (c) to mitigate the effects of the war by self help, (d) to keep up the morale of the people, and (e) to ensure the unity of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

In order to divert the attention of the people from the rising tide of freedom struggle Maharaja instituted a Royal Commission on 12th July, 1943, under the chairmanship of Ganga Nath, Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir. It consisted of 12 members all of whom were nominated and majority of them belonged to vested interests. Most of them were pensionaries, Jagirdars, and other reactionary elements. National Conference was also given representation and it nominated Mirza Muhammad Afzal Beg, and Khawaja Ghulam Muhammad Sadiq to participate in the Commission. Soon it became clear that the main aim of the Commission was to safeguard the rule of the Maharaja after the withdrawal of British from India. The Commission had its value in so far as it showed the willingness of the Government to enquire into the abuses of State administration, but in its day to day working it proved unsatisfactory and ultimately the National Conference called upon its members to resign.¹² In reaction to the failure of Commission, National Conference decided to prepare a constitution for the future of the State, according to its policy and programme, which came to be called as *Naya Kashmir Manifesto*. The document was prepared with the purpose of its submission to Maharaja for implementation as well as to educate the people of the State about the future plans of National Conference. With the co-operation of the workers of different regions of the State, a list of their grievances and demands was prepared by Maulana Muhammad Syed Masoodi. It was due to the efforts of B.P.L. Bedi that this document was given the shape of a memorandum as well as

11. *Ibid.*

12. S.M. Abdullah, *Atish-i-Chinar*(autobiography), Ali Muhammad and Sons, Srinagar, 1982, p.499.

manifesto.¹³ It was developed in a booklet with English language. Later on it was translated in Urdu by Maulana Masoodi in the interests of common readers.

The *Naya Kashmir Manifesto* was a political document containing aims and objectives of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, with respect to the future constitutional framework, economic planning, agricultural and industrial growth and socio-cultural amelioration of the State. The manifesto remained the *Political Bible* of the National Conference till all the objectives contained in it are not achieved. The preamble of the *Naya Kashmir Manifesto* reads as under:¹⁴

We the People of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Frontier Districts, Illaqa of Poonch, Chinani, commonly known as the residents of the Jammu and Kashmir State, in order to perfect our union in the atmosphere of full equality and self determination to raise ourselves and our children for ever from the abyss of oppression, poverty, ignorance, degradation and superstition of the dark ago into the sunlit valley of peace and plenty ruled by freedom, science and honest toil, to participate in the historic resurgence of the people of the East and the working masses of the world and destined to make our dear homeland Kashmir, a dazzling diamond on the snowy forehead of Asia, do hereby propose, propound and endorse the following constitution for our State.

As mentioned earlier there existed no civil liberties in the State of Jammu and Kashmir as late as 1933. Even after the grant of some civil liberties there were several taboos that restricted the individual as well as collective freedom of the people. There was still lack of modern political consciousness among the people who were not conscious about their rights and duties towards the State. The Conference also aimed at propagating its message of aspirations towards the achievement of civil liberties. Therefore, it proposed a constitution which provided for the equality of the rights of all citizens, irrespective of their caste, colour and creed.¹⁵

The appointment of Glancy Commission (1932) was a landmark in the freedom struggle of Jammu and Kashmir. It was on its recommendations that a Legislative Assembly called Praja Sabha was established in the State as late

13. Abdul Rashid Taseer, *op.cit.*, Srinagar, n.3, pp. 311-12.

14. *Ibid.*, pp.314-315.

15. *Naya Kashmir Manifesto*, vide Abdul Rashid Taseer, *op.cit.*, pp.314-320.

as 1934. However, it did not satisfy the aspirations of the people because it could not establish a responsible Government. Therefore, the leadership of National Conference proposed the establishment of a legislature that provided for a complete responsible Government in the State.¹⁶

As a matter of fact the society of the princely states was extremely backward in comparison to British India. The worst hit of this backwardness was the women folk. The women were lagging behind in modern education and were the victim of various types of violence because of traditional life style and the male domination. The leadership of the Conference realised the importance of women upliftment towards the reconstruction of a healthy society. That is why the *Naya Kashmir Manifesto* included a separate charter on women that laid an emphasis on the women education.¹⁷

The leadership of the Conference was conscious about the significance of modern education towards the reformation of the society. It realised that it was only through the agency of education that people would understand the scope of democracy and responsible Government. From the very inception they struggled hard to persuade the people to obtain education and emphasised upon the State to open an adequate number of schools and colleges so that the people would not face difficulties in educating themselves. The *Naya Kashmir Manifesto* therefore, proposed the establishment of a National Council on education for the development of education in the State.¹⁸

Centuries slavery, subjugation and exploitation had turned the Kashmiris fatalistic, credulous and lethargic. The Conference desired to instil a confidence among the people of the State in general and the Kashmiris in particular. Therefore, it struggled hard for a cultural renaissance in the State. In order to realize these objectives the Conference envisaged the establishment of an organisation for cultural upliftment. It laid down that in order to encourage a composite culture in the State, it was imperative to establish a Cultural and Social Council.¹⁹

The chronic poverty and the absence of modern medical facilities resulted in recurrent epidemics and cholera in Kashmir. It amounted to the death of a large number of people. The Conference from the very beginning stressed upon the State to open dispensaries and hospitals in urban as well as in rural areas. National Conference declared the health care of its citizens as one of

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 321-324.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 318-319.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 365-68.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 368-69.

the fundamental duties of the State. In order to achieve the objectives it envisaged the establishment of a National Health Council. The jurisdiction of the Council was also underlined.²⁰

The modern means of communication in the State in general and valley of Kashmir in particular were extremely poor. In Kashmir till 1940 river Jhelum from Khanbal to Khadanyar mainly served the transport needs of the people. No doubt the Valley had been connected to plains with the construction of Jhelum valley Cart Road and the Banihal Cart Road. But till 1947 the transport system of the valley was very backward because of the non availability of the required roads and the tools of transportation. It was an impediment in the overall development of the State. National Conference therefore, proposed the establishment of a National Communication Council for the improvement of the transportation. It also laid down guidelines in order to realise this objective.²¹

Knowing that agriculture was the backbone of its economy, the leadership strived for the agricultural development of the State. Having a one crop year economy because of its geography the valley especially during the colonial era witnessed recurrent food crisis. That is why the Conference laid an emphasis on agricultural development. It envisaged for the establishment of an Agricultural Council for agricultural planning in the State. The object of agricultural plan was the creation of congenial conditions for self-sufficiency.²²

The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference claimed that its objective was to create a classless society in which every individual had complete right to develop himself and enjoy a good standard of living by ending all means of exploitation and providing equal opportunities for all. It desired the State of Jammu and Kashmir to have everything within democracy and in accordance with planned economy. It proposed for a State Planning Commission aimed at greater production, improvement in the standard of life and creation of capacity for national defence. For this purpose, production, consumption, commerce and revenue were to be controlled on cooperative basis. The representatives of the people had to determine guidelines for future economic and social development of the State. The main aim of economic planning was to bring forth such a social order in which equality prevailed in all walks of life.²³

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 363-65.

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 359-60.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 342-45.

23. *Ibid.*, pp. 333-44.

As mentioned earlier that the worst hit of colonial exploitation was the working class. It mainly included peasantry and the Shawl-weavers. The peasants were born in debt, lived in debt and died in debt. The Conference was therefore, particular about the development of agriculture and the upliftment of the peasantry. The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference declared to bring about a green revolution in the State by introducing the most modern methods of agriculture, cattle and sheep breeding, poultry and dairy farming. It declared that the land belongs to tiller and the landlord has no right over the land or the peasant.²⁴

Shawl-weavers also lived in chronic poverty because of the exorbitant taxation policy of the State. In 1865 they had revolted against the exploitation but the revolt was put down with a heavy hand. The Conference often lamented on the miserable condition of this class and stressed upon the State to reduce the burden of taxes levied from Shawl-weavers. It also suggested the State to take appropriate measures towards the development of Shawl industry. Later in its manifesto the Conference came forward with a specific policy for the industrial development and the rehabilitation of the workers. The Conference believed in raising the standard of living by industrial production. But, it did not want a man to be the slave of a machine. According to it, a machine would be a friend of man if it is owned by the state, so that it is used for the benefit of all its citizens.²⁵

The fifth annual session of the Conference was held at Srinagar on 28, 29 and 30 September, 1944, at Mujahid Manzil under the Presidentship of S.M. Abdullah. It was in this session that the National Conference adopted the *Naya Kashmir Manifesto* as its social, political and economic programme. The session also deliberated upon the significance of the manifesto. In his Presidential address S.M. Abdullah stressed upon the workers and common audience for the reading and understanding of *Naya Kashmir* programme. He made a stirring appeal for the unity of people under the umbrella of National Conference. Moreover, he declared independence of India pre-requisite for the freedom of princely states.²⁶

The sixth annual session of National Conference was held on 3, 4 and 5 August, 1945, at Sopore under the Presidentship of S.M. Abdullah again. This time National Conference had invited the leadership of Indian National Congress to participate in the session. Among the prominent luminaries of the

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 246-47.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 351-56.

26. Presidential address delivered to the fifth annual session of the National Conference by S.M. Abdullah at Mujahid Manzil, September, 1944.

Congress who participated in this session included Jawaharlal Nehru, Mian Iftikhar-ud- Din, Mr. Asif Ali Khan, Abdul Gaffar Khan, Jainaraian (General Secretary States' People's Conference), Mr. Shakir Ali and Achal Ishwar Prasad. Maulana Azad retired to Gulmarg and did not attend any function in the State other than Hazuri Bagh public meeting of 1st August, 1945. A number of correspondents of various newspapers and the representatives of various news agencies all over India had flocked to the valley in order to give coverage to the National Conference session. All India Radio announced the deliberations of the different meetings of the session.²⁷

Sopore annual session was important because it was at this session that National Conference passed a resolution in favour of self-determination. It is to be noted that the National Conference was the first nationalist organization of the sub-continent to adopt this resolution and the All India Congress Committee passed the same resolution later than National Conference. The proceedings of the session started with the welcome address presented by Sofi Muhammad Akbar who was the Chairman of the Reception Committee. The session proved to be a grand show and not less than 20,000 people attended it. It was for the first time that National Conference session was enthusiastically attended by the delegates all over the States irrespective of their caste and creed. The camping ground of the delegates had been named as *Hurriyat Nagar (the city of freedom)*. It was on the request of Maulana Masoodi that Abdul Gaffar Khan started his speech. By declaring S.M. Abdullah as the harbinger of Kashmir awakening Adul Gaffar Khan observed that, "for Kashmiris S.M. Abdullah is the gift of God and if you do not follow him, you will be humiliated."²⁸

In his presidential address S.M. Abdullah after focussing on some past crucial stages of Kashmir freedom movement argued that National Conference was the only path towards the freedom of forty lakh people of the State. Referring to various stages of the national movement in the perspective of World War II, S.M. Abdullah declared an everlasting political and economic revolution as a means to get rid of poverty and subjugation. He also emphasized upon the need for co-operation between Muslim League and Congress in order to lead the freedom movement of India to its logical conclusion.²⁹

27. Presidential address delivered to the sixth annual session of the National Conference by S.M. Abdullah at Sopore, August, 1945.

28. Addresses of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan to Sopore session of National Conference, August, 1945, vide S.M. Abdullah, n.12, p.333.

29. Presidential address delivered to the sixth annual session of the National Conference by S.M. Abdullah at Sopore, August, 1945.

Jawaharlal Nehru in his speech while calling Kashmiri as his ancestral language regretted for not being familiar with it. He made it clear that his friendship with S.M. Abdullah was ten years old and expressed his pleasure on participating in the annual session of National Conference for the first time. He argued that because of the large participation of the people in public meetings it was impossible to ascertain their affiliations. However, on the basis of personal experience he asserted that S.M. Abdullah was the most popular leader of the State. He also added that the people of the State were fortunate enough to have such a type of leader. Moreover, he lashed out at Kashmiri Pandits for their narrow minded approach and suggested them to join National Conference in order to liberate their homeland.³⁰

As mentioned earlier the State was the worst hit of agrarian crises and the condition of the tillers of the soil was unbearable. Therefore, the nationalist Government after assuming power first of all concentrated on the land reform. It passed the historic Abolition of Big Landed Estates Act in 1950. By the end of February, 1951, about 156,176 *kanals* (19,522 acres) of agricultural land was transferred in ownership right to 15,872 tillers and 72,120 *kanals* (9,015 acres) of land had been vested in the State.³¹ The Act provided that an individual could not possess paddy land beyond 182 *kanals*. It amounted to the abolition of 396 big *jagirdars*. About 4.50 lakh acres land was transferred that benefitted to 2.50 lakh tillers.³² However, the orchards, the most valued land and generally in the possession of Pandit bureaucracy and the political elite were exempted from the Act. It evoked a strong resentment and criticism from the politically conscious people especially the leadership of *Kisan Mazdoor Conference* (1945-1951).

As mentioned earlier that the working classes of the State were the worst hit of indebtedness. By cancelling their debt National Conference ended the oppressive institutions of *waddari* and *Sahukari*. In this connection a Debt Reconciliation Board was constituted and its discretion was kept beyond the judiciary. A debtor who had paid more than one half of the gross amount either in cash or kind, his debt was cancelled. Another important measure that the nationalist Government undertook till its dismissal in 1953 was the establishment of a university in Kashmir. It also reserved 35% of the budget

30. Address of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru to Sopore session of National Conference, August, 1945, vide Abdul Rashid Taseer, *op.cit.*, n. 3, pp. 423.

31. Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, Revenue Minister, Jammu and Kashmir, *Agriculture Reforms in Kashmir*, Rambir Government Press, Jammu, 1951, p. i.

32. S.M. Abdullah, *op.cit.*, n.12, pp.489-99.

for the educational development of the State. Besides, it was for the first time that the sons of the soil were appointed on key positions and gazetted posts in which the Muslims received a reasonable share. It is to be noted that since 1846 the Muslims had been kept away from State administration due to their educational backwardness and the sectarian character of the State.³³

The above discussion makes it abundantly clear that National Conference was a secular organization that struggled hard for the welfare of the State. Its secular character was attested and substantiated during the communal riots of 1947. At this crucial occasion the Conference activated its volunteer corps in order to ensure the security of minorities in the valley of Kashmir. It was due to the secular ethos of Kashmir and the efforts of National Conference that whereas there was a communal holocaust in Northern India, the valley of Kashmir continued to remain peaceful. That is why Mahatma Gandhi had observed 'a ray of hope in Kashmir'.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 494-99.

PROBLEM OF INTEGRATION OF INDIAN STATES— CONSTITUTIONAL ASPECT

*Buta Singh Sekhon**

The ingration of Princely States was by no means an easy task. The disparity between the British dominion and the Princely States in all walks of life was too great. Their integration meant not only modification of the British administrative and economic machineries but it meant complete replacement of the old machineries by new ones. In addition, the old treaties and statements by the British statesmen increased the complexity of the problem of the integration of the Princely States. Their number was also staggering no less than five hundred and sixty. There were three aspects of the problem :

- (i) Constitutional
- (ii) Economic and
- (iii) Administrative.

In this article only Constitutional aspect of the problem has been taken.

The paramouncy of the British Crown over the Indian States was a political relationship. It established, however, no constitutional links between the Princely States and the British Indian provinces. The legal position of the Indian States was in a bad condition. The Indian States on 15 August 1947 could be neither in Pakistan nor in India; their actual position was difficult to define. The constitutional position created by the British on the lapse of paramouncy obligations towards the States was not accepted by the Princes. But the British Government wished to terminate paramouncy and agreements through a provision in the Indian Independence Bill. The terms of the clause 7 of the Bill were as follows¹ :

(a) "His Majesty's government in the United Kingdom shall have no responsibility with respect to the peace and good government of any of the territories which immediately before that day were included in India;"

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1. *Indian Independence Bill* (Indian Reprint) (Delhi, 1947), National Archives of India (hereafter NAI), Janpath, New Delhi.

(b) The suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States shall cease and functions therefore exercisable by him with respect to the Indian States and any powers, authority or jurisdiction therefore exercisable by him in the Indian States, being functions, powers, authority or jurisdiction incident to or flowing from that suzerainty, shall to be exercisable; and

(c) Any powers, authority or jurisdiction which, at the date of the passing of the Act, are exercisable by His Majesty in the tribal areas by grant, usage, sufferance or otherwise shall lapse.”²

But V.P. Menon, the Reforms Commissioner at that time was of the opinion that since “the exercise of paramountcy was not based on any legislation or Parliament, its withdrawal need not be by means of Parliamentary legislation.”³ He also realized that “there were several important agreements which had been entered into for the common benefit of the states and British India where paramountcy did not enter and that the mutual rights and obligations of the parties under such agreements could not be regarded as lapsing on the withdrawal of paramountcy.”⁴

The Secretary of States suggested that sub-clause (b) and (c) of clause 7 should be as follows :⁵

(b) “The suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States lapses, with (it) all treaties and agreements in force at the date of passing of this Act between His Majesty and the rulers of the Indian States, all functions exercisable by His Majesty at that date with respect to Indian States, all obligations of His Majesty existing at that date towards Indian States or rulers thereof, and all powers, rights, authority or jurisdiction exercisable by His Majesty at that date or in relation to Indian States by treaty, grant, usages, sufferance or otherwise;

(c) This lapse also any treaties or agreements in force at this date of the passing of this Act between His Majesty and any persons having authority in the tribal areas, any obligations of His Majesty existing at that date to any such persons or with respect to the tribal areas, and all powers, rights, authority or jurisdiction exercisable at that date by His Majesty or in relation to tribal areas by treaty, grant, usage, sufferance or otherwise.”

With regard to clause (7) the Congress resented against the complete abrogation of the treaties and agreements with the States on the

2. *Ibid.*

3. V.P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States* (Calcutta, Orient Longmans; 1956), p. 260.

4. *Ibid.*

5. For more detail see Indian Independence Bill (Indian Reprint), 1947.

plea that it would create administrative chaos and confusion. They suggested that a standstill clause should be included in the Bill - "Untill new arrangements are made, the existing relations and arrangements between His Majesty's Government and any Indian rulers in matters of common concern shall continue as between the two dominion governments and the state concerned."⁶ The Viceroy pointed out that the unconditional lapse of treaties and agreements would hit the states equally hard and stated that a provision should be added with some time-limit i.e. till May 31st, 1948 for its operation.⁷

Congress leaders protested that there was no specific provision in the Bill for the accession of the States and they wished clause 2 to contain a specific provision to that effect, the Secretary of States for the special provision covering the accession of the States. A new clause was included at the end of the clause (2): "Without prejudice to the generalization of the provisions of sub-section (3) of this section, nothing in this section shall be constructed as preventing the accession of Indian States to either of the new dominions."⁸ Regarding clause 7, the Secretary of State agreed to insert the following provisions at the end of that clause.

"Provided that, notwithstanding anything in paragraph (b) or paragraph (c) of this sub-section, effect shall, as nearly as may be continued to be given in the provisions of any such agreements as is therein referred to which relates to customs, transit and communications, posts and telegraphs, or other like matters, until the provisions in question are denounced by the ruler of the Indian States or person having authority in the tribal areas on the one hand, or by the dominion or province or other part thereof concerned on the other hand, or are superseded by subsequent agreements."⁹

The additions to clause 2 and 7 did not satisfy the Congress leaders. At the same time they did not like the behaviour of the Political Department which was interested for the liquidation than in solving the problems which were to arise out of the lapse of paramountcy. It was found that the Political Department which managed the States encouraged them not to co-operate with the times. The rulers were only misguiding themselves as to the policy of the Government of India. So there arose a serious problem to the integration of the Princely States.

6. White Paper on Indian States (Delhi, 1950), pp. 173-174.

7. V.P. Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

8. *Indian Independence Act* (Indian Reprint) (Delhi, 1947), *op. cit.*

9. *Ibid.*

RE-ORGANIZATION OF PUNJAB AND EMERGENCE OF NEW ECONOMIC TRENDS

*Baljinder Kaur**

In the year 1966, the Akali Dal launched an agitation for reorganization of the Province on the basis of linguistic homogeneity into separate Punjabi and Hindi speaking Haryana. Before Indian independence the Congress had supported the demand of the Sikhs. The States Reorganization Commission appointed by the Prime Minister in December 1953, however, while recommending Reorganization of States for the rest of India on the basis of linguistic homogeneity rejected the demand for the formation of a separate Punjabi speaking state.¹

The Pandora's box was thus opened leading to demands throughout the country for further linguistic reorganization of states. The Government was under constant pressure of tension from its own prominent party members and as a result, the three members States Reorganization Commission was appointed.²

Master Tara Singh raised the demand of Punjabi Suba from time to time. Soon after he launched once again an agitation for a Punjabi speaking State. The 'agitation' became more and more vigorous and it created a sort of panic in the province and led the Government to accept challenge of Master Tara Singh. After a long period of struggle, soon after the cease fire war declared on September, 26, 1965. The Union Home Minister declared that the question of the Punjabi province would be examined all afresh and appointed a three member Cabinet Committee, consisting of Y.B. Chavan, Indira Gandhi and Mahavir Tyagi. This committee was to seek from time to time the advice of a Parliamentary Committee to be set up jointly by the Speaker of Lok Sabha and the chairman of the Rajya Sabha. While announcing the appointment of this Committee in Lok Sabha on September, 23, 1965, Gulzari Lal Nanda, the Home Minister made it clear that the government would make every effort to

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1. Jaswant Singh, *Master Tara Singh: Jiwan Sangharsh Te Udeshe*, Hards Printing Press, Amritsar, 1972, pp. 287-89.
2. Sarhadi Ajit Singh, *Punjabi Suba : The Story of Struggle*, Kapoor and Sons Publications, Delhi, 1976, p. 165.

remove the sense of grievances in regard to the language question and functioning of Regional Committee.³

On January, 10, 1966 Lachhman Singh Gill, General Secretary of the S.G.P.C and Rawel Singh, a member of its Executive met the Committee and presented the case of Punjabi-Speaking State.

On January, 29, 1966 Giani Kartar Singh and Harcharan Singh Brar appeared before the Committee on behalf of the Congress group in the Punjab Legislature. Both argued in favour of Punjabi Suba. The Committee received 7184 written memorandas. Members of Shiromani Akali Dal and Master Tara Singh personally met the committee at Amritsar and revived their demand for Punjabi Suba.⁴

It will be pertinent to observe that Hukam Singh secured an unanimous vote in favour of the creation of Punjabi Suba. But circumstances changed soon because Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri died at Tashkent in January, 11, 1966 and Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister on January, 20, 1966. In the arising circumstances Mahavir Tyagi, an important member in the Committee resigned from the cabinet. Gulzari Lal Nanda and Jagjivan Ram were put on the Committee in their place. Gulzari Lal Nanda, Union Home Minister, who as Minister-in-charge handled this issue, cut a sorry figure. It was greatly felt that he never wanted Punjab to be divided and was therefore, very sympathetic and cooperative with those who opposed the demand for Punjabi Suba.⁵

Although Indira Gandhi was against the idea for Punjabi Suba but by 1966⁶ the demand had grown so strong that she was in no position to resist it. However, the Congress working Committee under the presidentship of Kamraj in a meeting on March, 9, 1966 adopted a resolution favouring a Punjabi - Speaking State.

The Government of India approved 'in principle' the report of the Parliamentary Committee recommending that Punjab should be reorganized on linguistic basis and set up a Commission known as the 'Punjab Boundary Commission.' On 23 April 1966 to make a recommendation in the matter of the reorganization of the state that the demarcation of the boundary on a

3. Grover, Verinder, *The Story of Punjab Yesterday and today*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1975, p.260.
4. Jain Harish, *The Making of Punjab*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1993, p.177.
5. Dalip Singh, *Dynamics of Punjab Politics*, MacMillan India Publications, Delhi, 1981, p.124.
6. Devinder Pal Sandhu, *Sikhs in Indian Politics*, Patriot Publishers, New Delhi, 1992, p. 90.

linguistic basis had been made with utmost care and impartiality and after taking into consideration the interest of the country as a whole. The resolution of the Government of India appointing the Commission said;

The Government of India has decided to reorganize the present State of Punjab on linguistic basis so as to constitute from its territories two States namely Punjab and Haryana States after transferring to Himachal Pradesh such of the hill areas particularly of Hindi region of the State as are contiguous to that Union Territory and have cultural and linguistic affinities with it. For the purpose of determining the actual boundaries of these units the Government of India consider it necessary that there should be the examination of the matter by a Commission.

The Commission was required to apply the linguistic principle with due regard to the census figures of 1961 and other relevant considerations and may also take into consideration other factors such as;

- [1] Administrative convenience;
- [2] Economic well- being;
- [3] Geographical contiguity;
- [4] Facility of communications.

The Commission submitted its report on the division of the Punjab to the Government on May, 31, 1966. As per recommendations of the Boundary Commission the following Punjabi - Speaking areas went to Punjab;

[1] The districts of Gurdaspur [excluding Dalhousie, Balun Bukloh], Amritsar, Jullundhar, Ferozepur, Bathinda, Patiala, Ludhiana, and Tehsils Barnala, Malerkotla, and Sangrur [District of Sangrur], tehsil Roper [District Ambala], tehsil Dasuya, Hoshiarpur and Garhshankar and development blocks Anandpur, Nurpur Bedi and villages Kherabagh, Samipur, Bhabhaur and Kalseh from Una Block and village Kosari in Una tehsil all formed the Punjabi Speaking State.

[2] The Hindi - Speaking area to Haryana, district Hissar, Mohindergarh, Gurgaon, Rohtak and Karnal and tehsil Narwana and Jind [District Sangrur] and tehsil Kharar [Including Chandigarh capital project], Naraingarh, Ambala and Jagadhari [District Ambala] were to form Hindi-Speaking State. The hilly areas were given to Himachal Pradesh as like;

- [a] District Simla, Kulu, Kangra, Lahaul-Spiti.
- [b] The development Blocks Gagret, Amb and Una [Excluding village Kherabagh, Samipur, Bhabhaur and Kalseh] and village Kasri from tehsil Una [District Hoshiarpur].
- [c] Tehsil Nalagarh [District Ambala] .

- [d] Enclaves Dalhousie, Balun and Bakloh in Chamba district the hilly areas having cultural affinity with Himachal Pradesh were merged with Himachal Pradesh.⁷

The majority of the Commission by two to one declared Chandigarh and also Kharar tehsil to be part of Haryana State. In his dissenting note, third member of the commission, Subimal Dutt, favoured the inclusion of Kharar and Chandigarh in Punjabi Suba on the following grounds;

[1] Though according to census of 1961 the basis of demarcation, the Hindi-speaking population in Kharar tehsil is no doubt 52.2%, the Punjabi - speaking population in the rural areas is 56.2%.

[2] Under the Sachar Formula of 1949, Kharar tehsil had been placed in the Punjab region.

[3] The Hindu population in Chandigarh capital Project is purely migratory, having come from Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan for labour only. Therefore, Kharar tehsil and Chandigarh cannot be considered to be Hindi-speaking.⁸

The Akali reaction to the report was sharp, and they put pressure on the Union Government for the inclusion of Chandigarh in Punjab. Akali leader Sant Fateh Singh issued a statement warning that the government would be responsible for the consequence that might follow if Chandigarh went to Haryana.⁹

Master Tara Singh demanded that Punjabi Suba would be vested with right of succession from the Indian Union. The government of India, therefore, while accepting the recommendations of the Boundary Commission made a few alterations and included Punjabi-speaking area of Kharar tehsil in Punjab and declared Chandigarh to be a Union Territory.

The important provisions proposed in the Punjab Reorganization Bill were; Common link between the State of Punjab and Haryana, such as common Governor, a common High Court, a common University, Panjab University and Punjab Agriculture University, a common Electricity Board and a common Warehousing Corporation, the State Financial Corporation, etc.¹⁰

7. P.C. Joshi (ed.), *Punjabi Suba : A Symposium*, National Book Club Publication, Delhi, 1986, Appendix, p.146.

8. Government of India, *The Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966*, Government of India Press, Delhi, 1967, pp.1-2.

9. Mohinder Singh, *The Akali Struggle : A Retrospect*, Atlantic Publications and Distributors, New Delhi, 1988, p. 4.

10. Manorma Kohli, "Protest Movement in the Punjab : A Case Study of the Punjabi Suba Agitation", *The Panjab Past and Present*, Vol. XVII-II, 1985, p. 291.

The Punjab Reorganization Act was approved by both the Houses. It received the president's assent on 18 September 1966. It was decided by the government that Chandigarh was to be Union Territory and the joint capital of both the States. The Centre was to recover the rent or contribution from both the states for use of the most of the existing buildings in Chandigarh housing the offices and departments of the two New States.

A new State of Punjab with an area of 50255 sq. kilometers came into existence under the Punjab Reorganization Act No.31 of 1966 on September 18, 1966. In the first two consecutive elections to the State Assembly held after Punjab's reorganization, the Akali Dal romped sufficient majority to form its government. These governments were, however, not allowed to function by the Congress Party which organized defections to pull them down. With the failure of these experiments in the State government, it dawned on the rank and the file of the Akali Dal that governments formed by them in the State under the existing circumstances were doomed to expend themselves in the exertions to survive against the subversive manipulations of the Centre.[4] They also realized that with the creation of the Punjabi Suba large tracts of Punjabi speaking areas had been lost to Haryana and Himachal Pradesh which the Akali Dal in spite of being in the government was unable to recover. The issue aroused in Sikhs deep emotions over the steady loss of their territorial identity beginning from the time of India's independence.¹¹

The boundaries of contemporary Punjab demarcated in November 1966. The principle of a Punjabi Suba was conceded but not before Sant Fateh Singh had postponed his intended fast- unto- death in the interest of the national emergency created by Indo- Pakistan war 1965. The Punjab Reorganization Act 1966 divided the unitary state into three parts. The majority South- East Hindi speaking region was formed onto a new state of Haryana, the Punjabi – speaking but Hindi –populated areas of the Himalayan territory were attached to Himachal Pradesh, the rest of the Punjabi speaking area was delineated as the new Punjab. One fifth size of pre-independence Punjab, the new state had a population of 13.3 million. Three distinct regions, Majha, Doaba, and Malwa, 11 districts and a majority of Sikh community.¹²

Chandigarh became the capital of Punjab. But in 1966 it was declared a Union Territory while Simla was given away to Himachal Pradesh. The

11. Rai, Gulshan, *Formation of Haryana*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1987, p. 18.

12. Jodhika, Surinder, *Contemporary Punjab ; A Brief Introduction*, Deep and Deep Publishers New Delhi, 1975, p. 133.

Boundary Commission which had demarcated the areas to become the unilingual States of Punjab and Haryana had used the census of 1961 as the basis for its award. The census was admittedly defective and it expressed communal mischief of Hindus who, as already mentioned, had their mother tongue registered as Hindi although in fact they spoke only Punjabi. It was on the basis of this census of 1961 that the Commission had recommended the transfer of Chandigarh to Haryana. One member of the Commission, S. K. Dutta, gave his dissenting note saying that Chandigarh should not be included in Haryana, but be given to Punjab. The government, however, decided to keep Chandigarh as the joint capital of both the states. Twenty years have passed since Chandigarh remains a Union Territory.¹³

On September 3, 1966, the Punjab reorganization bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha and on November 1, 1966, Punjabi speaking state became reality. With the birth of the new Punjab, Sikhs had entered the most creative half – decade of their modern history. The realization of a dominant political ambition often times heralds the advent of political power. This came strikingly true for Sikhs in the Punjab. On March 8, 1967, Gurnam Singh, the Akali nominee, took over as Chief Minister of the State.¹⁴

The occurrence of Green Revolution which synchronized with Reorganization of the state in 1966 brought a big boost to the industrial economy through both forward and backward linkages and continuous process of transfer of resources from agriculture to industry. Leaving the initial phase of Green Revolution before 1970-71, the growth rate of manufacturing sector has remained higher than the agricultural growth. Improvement in the growth performance of industrial sector in the state is based both on the greater geographic dispersal and diversification of industries.¹⁵

A number of industries are now less dependent on agriculture and increasingly make use of raw materials produced outside the state and export products to the national as well as international market. In this way, the Punjab economy has become more organically integrated to the national market. The state has some flourishing industrial centres and enjoys a leading role in the manufacture of sports goods, hosiery, surgical instruments, food

13. Lamba, Krishan Gopal, *Dynamics of Punjabi Suba Movement*, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1999, p. 97.

14. Sandhu, Lakhwinder Singh, *Party Politics in Punjab*, Harman Publications, New Delhi, 1994, p. 132.

15. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2004, p. 66.

processing, steel and cycle parts. Technology is indispensable factor for the development economy. The economic revolution in the history of Punjab, started with the establishment of Punjab Agricultural University at Ludhiana which was setup in 1962. It was here that the visiting Norwegian American Agro- Scientist, Norman Borlaug came, they evolved new strains of wheat and rice and the seeds on to the farming community. There was extensive use of tractors, threshers, harvesters and chemical fertilizers.

Punjab agriculture has undergone significant structural change since the advent of the Green Revolution in mid sixties. Traditional agriculture has given way to modern and commercial agriculture. It was the adoption of dwarf wheat varieties in the early seventies, which completely transformed the agriculture scene, since the sixties, the agricultural policy of the country has remained focused on increasing agricultural production especially of food grains. Apart from high yielding varieties of wheat and rice, consolidation of land holdings, expansion of irrigation facilities especially lifting the ground water through tube-wells and pump-sets, higher use of chemical fertilizers, farm mechanization etc.¹⁶

The contribution of HYV, fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, weedicides, and irrigation in increasing the agricultural production. In brief, the growth of agricultural production in Punjab was mainly contributed by food grain crops. This is also an important factor in the increasing contribution of food grains in the central pool. Only wheat and rice among food grain crops have shown a remarkable increase in their production, which is the result of an increase in area under these crops and increase in the per-hectare yield of these crops. It appears to be true that green revolution in Punjab is wheat- rice revolution.

An important social affect of the Green Revolution was the destruction of the old *Jajmani* System and its replacement by a contractual relationship. This severely affected the fortunes of service caste and artisans, resulted in unemployment and under-employment. Many were driven to poverty. The Green revolution also brought change in lifestyle. Aspiration increase there was demand for education, better housing and better consumer goods. The traditional 'joint family' system was gradually replaced by the 'Nuclear family'. Thus, the village became fully ready infrastructure-wise to participate in the Green Revolution which , being based on improved seeds, assured irrigation,

16. Abbi, B.L., *Post -Green Revolution Rural Punjab : A Profile of Economic and socio-cultural change 1965-95*, Publication Centre, Research in rural and industrial development, Chandigarh, p. 32.

chemical fertilizers, modern machinery, pesticides etc, was to take roots soon.¹⁷

The village came to have its own Primary School from 1961-1966, *pucca* roads from 1968-69, dispensary from 1975-76, grain market and focal point from 1979-80, veterinary hospital from 1980-81, agriculture development office from 1982-83, central cooperative bank from 1982-83, milk collection centre from 1991-92, electricity complaint centre from 1992-93, police chownki from 1993-94 and middle school and telephone service from 1994-95. Resulting, the per capita income of the state has increased and economic condition of the people has changed. In many ways, the introduction of Gramophone, Radio, Telephone, Electricity, and Education has affected the society significantly. Now there is a lot of change in the social life, caste system, marriages and general awareness of the people. The main purpose of the present study is to examine Reorganization of Punjab and emergence of new economic trends.¹⁸

17. *Ibid.*

18. Mohan Lal, *Disintegration of Punjab*, Sameer Publication, Chandigarh, 1998, p.140.

LANGUAGE ISSUE DURING PUNJABI SUBA MOVEMENT

Pankaj Anand*

Language is an ethnic maker like dress or physical feature. It distinguishes the ethnic group from others like culture. It marks the community apart from all other. To some however, language is more than a maker, it is crucial in the tie to the eternal, the building on the past to contribute the future.¹ A study of the language problem is very vital to the correct understanding of the demand for Punjabi Suba. The problem was unique and although it can be broadly compared with the linguistic demand of other religion because of its peculiar characteristics. It needs to be studied in the specific context of communal and political factor of the state.²

Before Punjab was divided in 1947, British were the ruler and Punjabi in different dialects was a spoken language of the people of the state, but the academic and administrative languages were Urdu and English. Urdu was the legacy of Muslim rule and English ofcourse was the language through which the British carried on their administration. After the partition of the Punjab, with political jurisprudence of the country the old arrangement remained in practise. But English being a foreign language has to be replaced by the national language which was Hindi according to new Constitution. The people of Punjab except the Sikhs wanted to adopt Hindi as their academic and administrative language. The Sikhs on the other hand wish to give to Punjabi in Gurmukhi script the status of an academic and administrative language. Punjabi is the language spoken by the people of Punjab and Punjabi in Gurmukhi script belongs to the Sikhs and they want to raise its dignity and status. The British produced in the Sikhs the sentiment of a separate community by giving them special concession and privilege and they did to achieve their own end.³ But later this issue was given a strong communal complexion by both the Sikhs and the Hindu Communalists.⁴

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1. Pritam Singh Thandi and Shinder Singh, *Punjabi Identity in a Global Context*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p. 368.
2. Satyah Rai, *Punjab Since Partition*, Durga Publication, Delhi, 1986, pp. 266-268.
3. *The Tribune*, 15 August, 1960.
4. Bipin Chandra, *India After Jurisprudence 1947-2000*, Penguin Books, New Delhi, 2000, p. 326.

The demand for the creation of Punjabi speaking state was first made on 2 August 1948 by Master Tara Singh in his press conference at Delhi in which he disclosed that he had written to Dr. Rajindra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly, that the Punjabi Suba should be demarcated on a linguistic basis.⁵

The demand for the creation of a Punjabi speaking state was reinforced in 1948 when language assumed greater importance. In February 1949 the Municipal Committee of Jalandhar, a strong hold of the Arya Samaj passed a resolution to use Hindi in Devnagri script should be introduced in all its schools.⁶

Sardar Hukam Singh, a Sikh member of the Constituent Assembly, in his memorial to the President of the Constituent Assembly in September 1949 sought the demarcation of the linguistic state on the basis of Punjabi. The issue was referred to the Panjab University with the expectation that the academicians would find a solution mutual satisfactory to both the communities. However, the Hindu and Sikh members of the senate were divided on communal lines and Hindu members being in majority were successful in getting the Punjabi rejected as the medium of instruction.⁷

Consequently the Punjab Government took the initiative and introduced Sachar Formula on language question on October 1, 1949. The Punjab Government officially demarcated the area as Hindi and Punjabi speaking zones and declared the Hindi or Punjabi as the regional language in the respective zones.⁸

The loophole of the formula lay in the permission that the choice of medium in either zone would be that of the parents at the primary stage.⁹ The demand for the creation of a Punjabi speaking state was further reinforced as a result of the disowning of their mother tongue by large section of Hindus in the 1951 census.¹⁰

According to Paul Brass, the dominant Hindu majority unable to assimilate the Sikhs, adopted the tactics of avoiding of their own assimilation by disowning the Punjabi language so that the Sikhs, a minority people by

5. Jatinder Kaur, *Politics of Sikhs : A Study of Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee*, National Book Publishers, New Delhi, p. 87.

6. Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon, *Truth About Punjab : White Paper*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1996, p. 46.

7. Ajit Singh, Sarhadi, *Punjabi Suba : The Story of the Struggle*, U.L. Kapoor and Sons, New Delhi, 1971, p. 178.

8. *The Tribune*, 20 April, 1951.

9. K.C. Gulati, *The Akali Past and Present*, Asha Janak Publication, New Delhi, 1974, p. 151.

10. Dalip Singh, *Dynamics of Punjab Politics*, Macmillan, New Delhi, 1981, p. 25.

religion, might become a minority by language as well.¹¹

In connection with the status of Punjabi and Hindi in the Punjab, the *Punjab Prantiya Hindi Sahitya Sammelan* declared that historically and academically Punjabi and Hindi were not different languages. Hence Hindi should be declared state language of Punjab. Punjabi in Gurmukhi script was the sentimental and communal language of the Sikhs and should not be thrust upon all Punjabis.¹² By tying the Punjabi with the Punjabi language, the Sachar Formula has made the Punjabi language a communal language of the Sikhs. The *Sammelan* called upon the Hindi loving public of the Punjab to observe September 27, 1953 as 'Anti-Sachar Formula' day.¹³

Narain Singh, member of Legislative Council in his article, "Sikh problem in Punjab" criticized Master Tara Singh for his communal approach and narrow thinking. He said if he actually love Punjabi, he would have talked about greater Punjab, but he desired to have another partition of the existing Punjab and get a certain area in which he as a head of communal organization could dominate.¹⁴

Babu Purushottam Das Tondon, M.P. and Former President of the Indian National Congress said that formation of provinces on linguistic basis would be suicidal to the interest of the country. There were over 300 dialects spoken in different parts of India and if demand for creation of provinces acceded on the basis of dialect which would mean the vivisection of the country into so many units. The unity and future of the country lay in adoption of one language Hindi, both as *Rashtra Bhasha* and the *Raj Bhasha*.¹⁵

The famous Arya Samaj leader and Punjab Politician, Lala Lajpat Rai, who actually did not know the Hindi alphabet entered political life in this controversy because he came to believe that Hindi could be the foundation for the edifice of Indian Nationalism.¹⁶

G.S. Tohra, President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, stated that one would have been living in a united, peaceful Punjab if the Punjabi speaking Hindu had not disowned their own Punjabi language. It was a misinterpretation of colossal magnitude in Indian History on the part of over ten million Hindus who lied in the census and disowned their Punjabi language with open encouragement and support from their Arya Samaj and

11. Paul, R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1974, p.298.

12. *The Tribune*, 15 September, 1953.

13. *Loc.cit.*

14. *The Tribune*, 5 September, 1953.

15. *The Tribune*, 23 September, 1953.

16. V.C. Joshi, *Lajpat Rai, Autobiographical Writing*, University Publishers, Delhi, 1965, pp. 25, 27.

Jan Sang leaders at a time when there was not even a single Hindi Newspaper in the combined state. Most of million of misguided souls were so totally ignorant of Hindi that even their one sentence of historic lie 'we are Hindi speaking' was uttered in the Punjabi language.¹⁷

While the slogan Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan found support from the Hindu community, the failing among the Sikh community was echoed by Sardar Hukum Singh (speaker of Lok Sabha) who observed while got state for their language we lost even our language.¹⁸ Giani Kartar Singh lamented that out of the fourteen languages duly recognised in the constitution of India, Punjabi alone was left without a state formed on its basis.¹⁹

The following was the copy of poster issued by the Arya Samaj, which was widely published and issued in the cities of Punjab: Remember, census is on, yours answers should be following:

Question	Answer
1. Religion	Vedic Dharma
2. Community	Arya Samaji
3. Race	Arya
4. Mother-tongue	Hindi

During the census of 1951 and 1961 the Arya Samajis left no stone unturned to incite the Hindus of the Punjabi region to give wrong statement-regarding their mother-tongue.²⁰

Giani Kartar Singh, the Revenue Minister Punjab said that death blow to the Punjabi nationality by foreign ruler's policy of divide and rule had unfortunately been carried forward by the communalists who widespread the gulf between the two communities on the issue of language. He asked the Hindus to give up their artificial opposition to Punjabi language and own it as their mother tongue.²¹

Even eminent and impartial observer like Kuldip Nayyar and I.K. Gujral hold the view that disowning of Punjabi language by the Hindus was a sinister move on the part of Punjabi Hindus. It has made the Punjab problem more complicated and complex, had this not been done, the solution of the problem would have been easier and simpler.²²

17. S.H. Sathananthan, *Hindu Sikh Conflict in Punjab : Causes and Cure*, Sri Guru Nanak Satsang Sabha, Madras, n.d., p. 08.

18. Ashutosh Kumar, 'Electoral Politics in Punjab ; 1966-2004', *Journal of Punjab Studies*, Vol. 12, 2005, p. 114.

19. Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon, *Truth About Punjab : White Paper*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, p. 51.

20. *Facts about Punjabi Suba*, Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, n.d., pp. 30-31.

21. *The Tribune*, 3 August, 1960.

22. G.S., Deol (ed.), *The Punjab Problem : An Academic Approach*, Sikh History Research Department, Khalsa College, Amritsar, 1989, p. 4.

One has rightly said about the language question when he was answering a Hindu lady who objected to this statement that Punjabi was the language of all Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims alike and asked if she had no right to change her language? Then he replied, the law has provided for a lady to change her husband, but not a mother. This is natural law that mother can't be changed. Hence mother tongue cannot be changed.²³

The often renouncement of Punjabi by the majority community was totally disenchanting. It sharply impinged upon their collective consciousness and altered them to the need of defending their religious and cultural right and serve to accelerate their political unification as perhaps nothing else could have done it.²⁴

Every state or province in India has her own language, religion and culture, but the mother tongue among these things is the most important one. A man is recognised by his mother tongue and it is the best medium of expressing the ideas and feelings of human beings. A Bengali or Madrasi cannot speak in Punjabi as fluently as he can speak in his own mother tongue. If a community forces to adopt any other language other than her mother tongue, it can never develop or prosper and even sometime becomes difficult for that community to survive.²⁵

Language is not particular to a religion but is the mother tongue of the inhabitant of the particular region as a whole. For example, Muslims are living in various countries such as Turkey, Arab, Iran etc., but their language is not the same. Although their religious book (*Quran Sharif*) is in Arabic, they have their own language for state administration and educational media. Similarly Hindi is neither the mother tongue of all the Hindus nor their religious language. Hindus residing in various states of the country speak different languages and received education in their respective mother tongue. Hindi being the National Language deserves respectable treatment by all alike.²⁶

In one of his speech Jawaharlal Nehru stated that one has to be liberal as possible and not try to suppress a language. We should not try to coerce anybody into using a language as far as possible. Whenever an attempt has been made to suppress a popular language or coerce the people into using some other languages, there has been trouble we have to develop our regional

23. Sant Fateh Singh, *Our Stand on Punjabi Suba*, Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, n.d., pp. 7-8.

24. Harbans, Singh, *Heritage of the Sikhs*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1983, p. 342.

25. *Facts About Punjabi Suba*, Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, n.d., p. 13.

26. Sant Fateh Singh, *Our Stand on Punjabi Suba*, *op.cit.*, p. 7.

languages and do everything to help them to grow.²⁷

Jawaharlal Nehru also in his book, *Glimpses of World History*, mention that Hindustani could become the common language of India, but this does not mean the other languages of India should disappear. They should certainly remain as a provincial language, for they have fine literature and we should never try to take away a well developed language from people. The only way for a people to grow, for their children to learn is through their own language.²⁸

R. Pestalozzi was the first secretary in the Swiss Embassy, New Delhi. He mentioned in his article *Swiss solution of language problem*, published in *The Tribune*, that over centralization of the administration is avoided with the effort that the language problem is much less formidable. He said seventy-two percent French and five percent Italian, but it is unthinkable that language of the majority German should become the single official language of the nation. In a democracy it is the duty of the majority not to impose itself on the minority, but to protect the minority because the freedom of the minority is just as important as the freedom of majority. So state government should recognise both Hindi and Punjabi and provide equal status.²⁹

When the Soviet Government came into power they found that only 12 of these sixty languages had separate script of their own. The remaining 48 had no script. The Soviet Government instead of imposing any of their own script on these 48 languages, appoint expert commission to create separate script for each one of them according to the need of their respective phonetics and thus gave each one of them its own script. Such sympathetic regard for the sentiments as well as the convenience of all has cemented that unity of the people of the U.S.S.R. instead of disturbing it.³⁰

On 22 December 1953, the Government appointed a state Reorganization Commission which included:

1. Sayid Fazl Ali, Chairman
2. Hriday Nath Kunzru
3. Kavalam Madava Pannikar.³¹

The Commission was required to investigate the condition of the problem, the historical background of the existing situation and bearing all the

27. *Jawahar Lal Nehru's Speeches*, Vol. V, March 1963, May 1964, Publication Division, Government of India, 1968, pp. 21-25.

28. J.L. Nehru, *Glimpses of World History*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1982, p. 23.

29. *The Tribune*, 2 August, 1960.

30. Sunder Lal, *Desirability of Punjabi Suba*, Shiromani Akali Dal, Amritsar, 1960, p. 4.

31. Mohan Lal, *Disintegration of Punjab*, Sameer Publication, Chandigarh, 1984, p. 53.

important and relevant factors.³² The Shiromani Akali Dal submitted a memorandum to State Reorganization Commission in support of the Punjabi Speaking State. Punjabi according to them was the oldest language having own script Gurmukhi, which has originated from brahmi script. It has its own separate culture and folk music and dances.³³

On 30 September 1955 the State Reorganisation Commission came out with its report. The Commission had not rejected the demand of Akali Dal but accepted the rival demand of the Maha Punjab Samiti though in a diluted form. It was pointed out that "Punjabi and Hindi which are spoken in Punjab akin to each other and both are understood by all sections of the people of the state."³⁴

The Commission was of the opinion that formation of proposed Punjabi speaking state would neither help to solve the script problem nor the communal problem. The imposition of Gurmukhi script on a section of the people strongly opposed to it would create a number of other problems for whatever the legitimacy of such a demand may be, there was no method by which a person can be compelled to adopt a mother-tongue other than that for which he himself show his preference.³⁵ The state reorganization report got mixed response. Master Tara Singh described the recommendation of S.R.C. as 'a decree of Sikh annihilation'.³⁶

Later Master Tara Singh along with Sardar Hukam Singh met Nehru on 22 January 1956 and a compromise formula was evolved known as Regional Formula.³⁷

It was primarily a political administrative Formula rather than an education Formula. In education it simply maintained the Sachar and PEPSU formula in the area where they had been in force before the merger.³⁸ Regional Formula also contain the provision that the Central Government will encourage the development of Punjabi language.³⁹

The Arya Samajists who had earlier refused to implement the Sachar Formula in their school now opposed the regional Formula as something much worse. Under the Hindu Raksha Samiti they started a 'Save Hindi' agitation in

32. *Report of the State Reorganisation Commission*, 1955, p. 1.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

36. *The Tribune*, 10 Oct., 1955.

37. Gurmeet Singh, *History of Sikh Struggle*, p. 120.

38. Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in the Punjab*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1966, pp. 111-112.

39. *The Tribune*, 4 April, 1956.

May 1957 in opposition to Punjabi.⁴⁰

The main demands of the Samiti were:

1. That there should be one language formula in the whole state of Punjab.
2. That the medium of choice should be left entirely to the choice of the parents.
3. That there should be no compulsion for the teaching of either of the two languages as a school language at any particular stage.⁴¹

Whereas many Arya Samajists were concerned primarily with educating Hindus in Hindu values through the medium of Hindi and therefore in protecting Hindi in Devnagri script at all cost. The R.S.S. and Jan Sangh leaders were more concerned with maintaining Hindu political dominance in the Punjab and for this they were prepared to compromise the standing of Hindi vis-à-vis Punjabi. In these situations the 'Save Hindi' agitation collapsed.⁴²

In the meantime certain other things happened which accelerate the demand for Punjabi Suba based on language. The bifurcation of state of Bombay into two states Maharashtra and Gujrat⁴³ and Government's acceptance on 30 July 1960 for creation of separate Nagaland.⁴⁴

In response to this Sant Fateh Singh reacted that, "when administration being handed over to the Nagas who were not even homogeneous in their language and who were committed to violence, how was it fair that the Punjabi speaking area which had got a common language and culture was not being entrusted with the status of statehood."⁴⁵

The demand for a separate Punjabi speaking state gained international support too. In Malaya a committee representing thirty three sovereign countries was set up in support of the demand for Punjabi Suba. The representative to the *New York Times* met Sant Fateh Singh and he proclaimed that the cause of the Sikhs was just. The British Broadcasting Corporation carried over voice to forty eight countries of the world and support their demand.⁴⁶ Time and again Sant Fateh Singh made his stand clear on Punjabi Suba, that he wanted a state based on language, regardless of the fact that

40. J.S., Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India : The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Cambridge University Press, New Delhi, 1984, p. 196.

41. Mohan Lal, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

42. Paul R., Brass, *op.cit.*, p. 333.

43. A.S., Narang, *Storm Over Suttlej : The Akali Politics*, Gitanjali Publishers, New Delhi, 1983, p. 140; also see H.S. Bajwa, *Op.cit.*, p. 96.

44. *The Tribune*, 31 July, 1960.

45. 'Nehru-Fateh Singh talk on February 1961', Gurmit Singh, *History of Sikh Struggles*, Vol. II, Atlantic Publishers, New Delhi, 1989, p. 369.

46. Sant Fateh Singh, *Do not Encourage Communalism*, Two Talks Between Sant Fateh Singh and Lal Bahadur Shastri, Shiromani Akali Dal, p. 53.

Sikhs were in a majority or minority.⁴⁷ Sant Fateh Singh in his article, "The Sikhs are slaves" written on 27 August 1965 favoured the linguistic principle only when the government announced that if non-Sikhs had owned Punjabi thinking, she would have no objection in establishing a Punjabi state.⁴⁸ On the nature and concept of Punjabi Suba Akali Dal split into two groups—Sant Fateh Singh group and Master Tara Singh group. The later remarked on Sant Fateh Singh's emphasis on language, that even if Punjabi would be declared the language of whole India, this would not help the Sikhs and only Sikh majority would improve their status and language issue was secondary.⁴⁹

In reaction to this, Fateh Singh remarked on 'Sikh homeland' demand by Master Tara Singh that this demand will die for good. It was a useless demand and has practically fizzled out.⁵⁰ The split between the Akali Dal manifest a ideological shift from religious to secular.

The most outstanding grievance of the Sikhs was the continued lack of confidence shown in them by the ruling party. The Sikhs have always stood as vanguard for freedom struggle and even during the Chinese aggression they were first and foremost to shed their blood.⁵¹

The outstanding contribution of the Sikhs during the war was so impressive that they built no excuse to resist any more demand for a Punjabi speaking state.⁵² The Government appointed a three men committee including Y.B. Chavan, Indira Gandhi and Mahavir Tyagi to find a co-operative solution of the linguistic problem forming Punjab.⁵³ The committee submitted its report on 18 March 1966 and recommended that Punjabi speaking region be reconstituted into a unilingual Punjabi state and the Hindi region be formed into Haryana state and hilly area be merged with Himachal Pradesh.⁵⁴ However

47. Sant Fateh Singh, *Our Stand on Punjabi Suba*, SAD, Amritsar, pp. 15-16.

48. Sant Fateh Singh, *The Sikhs are slaves*, Two Talks Between Fateh Singh and Lal Bahadur Shastri, SAD, Amritsar, p. 46.

49. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. II (1839-2004), Oxford University Press, Delhi, 2004, pp. 296-297.

50. H.K. Puri, 'The Akali Agitation : Socio-economic Basis of Protest', *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. VIII, pp. 114-115.

51. S.G.P.C Memorandum to Kamraj, President of All India Congress Committee on 10 September 1964. Gurmit Singh, *History of Sikh Struggle*, op.cit., p. 362.

52. Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon, *Truth About Punjab : S.G.P.C., White Paper*, S.G.P.C., Amritsar, 1996, p. 56.

53. Statement by Union Home Minister dated 23 September 1965. Verinder Grover (ed.), *The Story of Punjab Yesterday and Today*, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, Appendix III, 1995, p. 291.

54. Statement by Home Minister on 21 March 1966 in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Verinder Grover (ed.), op.cit., Appendix IV, p.292.

after some minor modification the Punjab reorganization bill was put into force on 1st November 1966.

Following was the breakup of the percentage of the Hindi speaking and Punjabi speaking people as shown in 1961 census.⁵⁵

HINDI-SPEAKING REGION

Name of the District	Population	Approximate Percentage of Hindi Speaking People	Approximate Percentage of Punjabi Speaking People
Simla	1,12,053	51.55	10.6
Karnal	14,90,430	86.25	13.30
Rohtak	14,20,398	98.91	1.01
Gurgaon	12,40,706	82.75	18.25
Ambala	13,73,477	66.72	30.48
Kangra, Lahaul and Spiti	10,82,971	71.65	28.35
Hissar	15,40,508	88.22	11.77
Mohindergarh	5,47,850	99.47	0.53
Sangrur	14,24,688	44.59	45.41

PUNJABI-SPEAKING REGION

Name of the District	Population	Approximate Percentage of Hindi Speaking People	Approximate Percentage of Punjabi Speaking People
Gurdaspur	9,87,994	49.74	48.97
Amritsar	15,34,916	76.56	22.93
Bhatinda	10,55,177	83.24	16.59
Jullundhar	12,27,367	61.25	38.22
Hoshiarpur	12,33,493	47.00	52.63
Ferozepur	16,19,116	66.96	32.61
Ludhiana	10,22,519	76.57	23.07
Kapurthala	3,43,778	76.09	23.32
Patiala	10,48,778	69.18	30.46
Sangrur	14,24,688	62.88	44.59

55. *The Tribune*, 13 March 1966.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN PUNJAB [1967-2004] : ISSUES AND TRENDS

Lakhwinder Singh Sidhu & Sumandeep Kaur Punia***

The voting pattern in Punjab has undergone a paradigmatic shift since 1996. The regional, religious, linguistic and ethnic issues have been swept under the carpet. Rather, the secular criteria such as governance and economic policies have taken precedence over the identity politics. The electorate in Punjab now seems to have begun to measure their economic gain when they are in the process of selecting a political party and pressing the button at the polling booth. It is a clear indication that people of Punjab instead of rhetoric, want 'economic growth' and 'good governance.' This is a good sign of further strengthening democratic process in the state.

Elections lie at the heart of democratic system as an expression of popular will. One of the important features of the democracy is 'elections at regular intervals'. It is the process by which political opinion of public is shaped, their ideas are crystallized and interests are articulated. It is through elections that the authority of the government is clothed with legitimacy. The elections held at regular intervals provide an opportunity to the people to express their faith in the government from time to time and change it when the need arises. Thus, periodic free and fair elections are indispensable for the success of democracy. India, being a federal parliamentary democracy, witnesses elections to the legislative bodies both at the national and state levels. Every election is different, in some ways, from the earlier ones. The electoral issues, manifestos, election slogans, campaigning techniques, voting behaviour, etc., have some novelty in each election. The study of elections is always an

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interesting and important subject. This article tries to present an analysis of Parliamentary elections in Punjab since its reorganization.

The reorganization of Punjab on linguistic basis in November 1966, led to vital changes in the demographic and political spheres of the state. The new Punjab was much smaller than the composite Punjab. It was left with only 41% of the area and about 55% of the population. The reorganization has had a considerable impact on the electoral prospects of political parties. Since then, the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Congress party happen to be the major political outfits in Punjab. The state had 18 Lok Sabha seats in 1952; 22 seats in 1957 and 1962; and 13 from 1967 onward. The recent Delimitation Commission was set up in 2002, and its recommendations were approved by the President, Pratibha Patil, on February 19, 2008. The forthcoming general elections to Lok Sabha are expected to be held as per the revised constituencies.¹ On the basis of 2001 census, which showed an increase in the SC population in Punjab, the Commission has increased the number of reserved constituencies from three to four in the state.

So far, the elections to Lok Sabha have been held for fourteen times² and the fifteenth general elections are due in 2009. The 1984 elections were postponed in the state of Punjab and Assam due to law and order problems and were held in 1985. Again in 1991, the Lok Sabha polls were not held in Jammu-Kashmir and Punjab due to same reason and were postponed till 1992. The success of elections depends upon how best the voters participate and exercise their right to vote. Stressing on the significance of voting Dwight D. Eisenhower holds: "A voter without a ballot is like a soldier without a bullet." Significantly, the people of Punjab, with the only exception of 1992, have participated in the democratic process of the country with immense enthusiasm. The poll percentage in Punjab has been mostly higher than the national turnout except in 1992 and 1999 (See Table-I).

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1. The revised Lok Sabha constituencies in Punjab include Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Khadoor Sahib, Jalandhar (SC), Hoshiarpur (SC), Anandpur Sahib, Ludhiana, Fatehgarh Sahib (SC), Ferozepur, Faridkot (SC), Sangrur, Bathinda, and Patiala.
 2. The elections were held in the years—1952, 1957, 1962, 1967, 1971, 1977, 1980, 1984, 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999 and 2004 respectively.

Table-I : Voters' Turnout in Lok Sabha Elections (1967-2004)-Vide Election Commission of India, New Delhi.

Year	No. of Constituencies in India	Percentage of Voting in India	No. of Constituencies In Punjab	Percentage of Voting in Punjab
1967	520	61.33	13	71.14
1971	518	55.29	13	59.90
1977	542	60.49	13	70.14
1980	542	56.92	13	62.65
1984*	542	63.56	13	67.36
1989	543	61.95	13	62.67
1991**	543	56.93	13	23.69
1996	543	57.94	13	62.25
1998	543	61.97	13	61.07
1999	543	59.99	13	56.11
2004	543	57.81	13	61.61

Source : *Election Commission of India*, New Delhi.

* The 1984 Lok Sabha elections were postponed in Punjab and were held in 1985.

** Again 1991 Lok Sabha elections were not held in Punjab and postponed till 1992.

The Indian political scene was dominated by the Congress both at the centre as well as state levels upto 1967. However, with Assembly elections in certain states in 1967, the monopoly of the Congress was shattered. Besides the Communist challenge to the Congress in Kerala and West Bengal, certain regional parties, like Akali Dal in Punjab, emerged as political forces to be reckoned within their respective areas of influence. In the reorganized Punjab, the Congress party failed to maintain its earlier dominant position. At that time the party was badly faction ridden and there was no leader of Kairon's mettle and national figure of Nehru's eminence. The image of the Congress stood tarnished in the country for having failed to get the territory occupied illegally by China, vacated.

After achieving success in the formation of Punjabi Suba in 1966, the Akali Dal was keen to topple the Congress in Punjab. Thus, in 1967 Lok Sabha elections, it formed an alliance of non-Congress parties. The alliance had no common ideological basis. If there was anything common among its partners it was their determination to deny power to the Congress [Bhatnagar and Verma 1995: 411]. Despite Punjab having turned into a Sikh majority state, the Akali Dal could not perform well. It got only three seats, whereas the Congress got nine seats. [See, Table II]. The poor performance of Akali

Dal may be attributed to the fear of the domination of Jat Sikhs among Punjabi Hindu sections. The other reason was split in the Akali Dal that resulted in the division of Sikh voters between two rival Akali groups. The Akalis were divided between the Sant Akali Dal and the Master Akali Dal groups. Besides, all Sikhs were not with the Akali Dal as the Congress also had sufficient support base amongst the Sikh population.

The 1971 Lok Sabha elections marked a new trend in the politics of Punjab in more than one way. The Congress won a landslide victory with ten seats out of a total of thirteen. This election indicated the beginning of a new partnership between the Congress and the Communist Party of India. On the other hand, the Akali Dal entered the electoral arena without any alliance for the first time since state's reorganization. All over the country, it looked as if the voters had rejected the religious and communal issues and had moved towards the secularization of politics. The Congress's slogan of *Garibi Hatao* (Remove Poverty) worked well for the party. The socialistic policies and positive programmes initiated by the Congress also seemed to have impressed the people. On the other hand, the prestige of the Akali Dal went down due to continued factional conflict.³ The people seemed to have lost faith in the efficacy of the non-Congress coalition governments. The entire picture of 1971 election revealed that it was the nationwide pro-Congress programme which helped it to win at the State level as well.

Under the leadership of Indira Gandhi, the Union Congress government imposed national emergency on June 25, 1975. The civil liberties were suspended in the country. The Akali Dal raised its voice against injustice and oppressive policies of the Congress regime and launched anti-emergency *Morcha* (movement). The Akali leaders were imprisoned along with the other opposition leaders. The general election to Lok Sabha was held in March, 1977 and soon after the emergency was lifted. The newly formed political outfit, the Janata Party, emerged as a formidable alternative to the Congress. In Punjab, the Akali-Janata-CPI (M) alliance trounced the Congress by winning all the 13 Lok Sabha seats. For the first time in the history of Punjab, the people rejected the Congress completely in the Lok Sabha elections. The Akali Dal emerged as one of the leading political parties in Punjab by winning 9 seats. The Janata Party got three and the CPI [M] one seat [See, Table II]. The Akali Dal's struggle against emergency had enhanced its prestige among

3. The Akali Dal was divided into three groups, namely, the Sant Akali Dal, the Gurnam Singh Akali Dal, and the Pheruman Akali Dal.

people. The defeat of Congress in all the constituencies was the consequence of the popular reaction against the emergency excesses, suspension of fundamental rights, denial of the freedom of press, and ruthless use of DIR and MISA. For the first time, in the history of the country, a non-Congress coalition government, i.e., Janata government was formed at the centre in 1977, under the leadership of Morarji Desai. The traditional voting pattern and vote banks had lost their significance. On the whole, this election was taken as a watershed in the post-independence history of electoral politics in the country as it ended the Congress's political monopoly in India.

Table II: Party Position in Lok Sabha Elections in Punjab (1967- 2004)

Year	1967	1971	1977	1980	1985	1989	1992	1996	1998	1999	2004
Total Seats	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	13
Congress	09	10	—	12	06	02	12	02	—	08	02
Akali Dal	03	01	09	01	07	—	—*	08	08	02	08
BJP**	01	—	03	—	—	—	—	—	03	01	03
CPI	—	02	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	01	—
CPI(M)	—	—	01	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
BSP	—	—	—	—	—	01	01	03	—	—	—
Akali Dal(M)	—	—	—	—	—	07	—	—	—	01	—
Independents /Others ⁴	—	—	—	—	—	03	—	—	02	—	—

Source: *Election Commission of India*, New Delhi.

* The major factions of Akali Dal had boycotted 1992 elections.

** The former Jan Sangh/Janata Party.

The Janata government could not complete its full term and fell in the third year of its rule. In the subsequent mid-term 1980 Lok Sabha elections, the Congress achieved spectacular victory. With the result, the Congress again recaptured the position of 1971. The intra-party conflict of Janata conglomerate resulted in eroding its image and legitimacy. The Akali Dal, as a partner in the Janata Government, came in for sharp criticism for shortage of essential goods and their rising prices. The Akali-Janata alliance was also in power in the state from mid 1977 till early 1980. The intense factional fight between the ministerial

4. In 1998 Lok Sabha elections in Punjab, the Akali Dal, led by Badal, had supported the Janata Dal's candidate, Inder Kumar Gujral, from Jalandhar Lok Sabha constituency as he, in his short stint as the Prime Minister of India, had waved the Rs 8500 crore of Punjab's loan due to the Centre which had occurred during the Sikh militancy era. He had won the election. The other seat was won by Satnam Singh Kainth belonging to the Bahunjan Samaj Morcha [BSM], a breakaway group of the BSP. The Akali Dal [Badal] had electoral alliance with the BSM.

wing, headed by Badal, and the organizational wing, led by Jathedar Talwandi, tarnished the party's image. The Akali-Nirankari conflict had also an adverse effect on the electoral fortunes of the Akali Dal. Although, a number of other factors also affected the 1980 Lok Sabha election results, but it was the lack of a common anti-Congress front in Punjab which led to the Akali Dal and its allies' defeat and the Congress's victory.

From the beginning of 1980s till early 1990s, Punjab went through a prolonged political turmoil. This period witnessed the rise and fall of Sikh militancy. The state had undergone President's rule from October 1983 to September 1985. The state suffered a huge loss of lives. The *Akal Takht*, the highest religious-cum-temporal seat of the Sikhs, was destroyed in the infamous 'Operation Blue Star' in 1984. In retaliation, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards. This was followed by anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and some other places in the country. With the signing of Rajiv-Longowal Accord in July, 1985, the elections to Punjab Vidhan Sabha and Lok Sabha were held simultaneously in September, 1985. However, the elections were boycotted by a section of the Akalis, led by Baba Joginder Singh, the father of late Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. The Akali Dal [Longowal] fought these elections without any ally and emerged victorious. The resentment among the Sikh masses against the Congress for demolition of the *Akal Takht* and the anti-Sikh riots turned them to support the Akalis. Sant Longowal's death also helped in moulding the public opinion in favour of the Akali Dal (L). The Sikhs closed their ranks and became closer to each other. Many Sikh voters, who were traditional supporters of the Congress, had moved away from the party. On the other hand, the Hindus relied around the Congress in the hope that the Congress was the only national party which could vindicate their honour as a religious community. The Akali Dal got seven and the Congress six Lok Sabha seats in 1985 election. However, the Akalis had got an absolute majority in the state Assembly and they formed the first-ever exclusive Akali ministry under the leadership of Surjit Singh Barnala.

The Union government did not implement the Punjab Accord. The law and order situation in Punjab got from bad to worst. Eventually, the Barnala government was dismissed on May 11, 1987 and state again came under the President's rule. The announcement made by the central government to hold ninth Lok Sabha elections in Punjab too, raised the hopes of the people of Punjab to have a democratic set up in due course of time. In 1989 Lok Sabha elections, it was the radical faction of Akalis, led by Simranjit Singh Mann, which gained an upper hand. The Mann's Dal had won seven seats and three

independents also won which had the support of the former. The moderate Akali groups could not get any seat. The Congress was badly mauled in elections. It could win only two seats. The remaining one seat went in the kitty of the BSP. The election results amply demonstrated that the people of Punjab were disgusted with the repressive measures of the Union government of the Congress. On the other hand, the public appeal, made by Akali Dal (Badal) to unite all the Akali groups against the Congress, went in vain. While the Hindu voters preferred the Congress, the Sikhs did not support the moderate approach of the Akali Dal (Badal) and Akali Dal (Longowal). Instead, the majority of Sikh voters opted for Akali Dal (Mann). Consequently, it emerged as a new substantial political force in Punjab. Belying apprehension of low turnout due to Sikh militancy, Punjab recorded 61.95 per cent polling in the 1989 Lok Sabha elections.

The contours of power at the centre were changed. The Congress lost the elections and Vishwanath Pratap Singh, who had deserted the Congress, became the Prime Minister as a nominee of the newly formed political outfit, which was named as the Janata Dal. He had revolted against the Congress over the issue of Bofors gun deal in which Rajiv Gandhi was alleged to have taken the bribe. V.P. Singh promised to solve the Punjab problem but his government could not last long and his successor, Chandra Shekhar, reaffirmed the promise made by the former. During his short tenure, Chandra Shekhar attempted to solve the vexed issue of Punjab but his government too could not last long. The Lok Sabha elections were to be held in June 1991. However, the Lok Sabha elections, alongwith the elections to Punjab Vidhan Sabha, were postponed by the Chief Election Commissioner of India in Punjab at the last moment. Ultimately, the elections to Punjab Assembly and Lok Sabha seats in the state were held simultaneously in February 1992. The elections were held under the shadow of guns. The officially announced poll percentage was merely 23.69 percent. The turnout was lower than critical Assembly elections held in relatively similar circumstances in the two problem states of Jammu and Kashmir (31.6 percent in 1987) and Assam (32.6 percent in 1983) and much lower than the average of 68.2 per cent in Punjab from 1966 to 1985. Unofficially, however, it was said to be only around 11 percent. The low turnout was interpreted by the Akalis as a victory of their boycott call rather than a victory of the Congress party. The voting turn out was largely limited to urban Hindu-dominated areas. The Congress made a clean sweep by winning 12 Lok Sabha seats out of a total of 13 seats in Punjab. The remaining one seat was won by the BSP [See, Table II]. Such an unprecedented

victory by the Congress, both in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in Punjab, was possible because of the absence of the major Akali factions from the electoral fray.

Table III: Vote-share of Parties in Lok Sabha Elections in Punjab (1967 – 2004)

Party Name	1967	1971	1977	1980	1985	1989	1992	1996	1998	1999	2004
Congress	37.31	45.95	35.87	52.45	41.53	26.29	49.27	35.10	25.85	38.44	34.17
Akali Dal	27.03*	30.5	40.57	23.38	37.17	5.24	2.80**	28.72	32.93	28.59	34.28
BJP***	12.48	4.45	12.98	9.97	3.39	4.17	16.51	6.48	11.67	9.16	10.48
CPI	4.28	6.22	1.61	1.27	3.64	2.00	1.57	1.60	3.40	3.74	2.53
CPI(M)	1.89	2.20	5.12	2.53	2.98	3.80	4.00	2.70	1.06	2.18	1.81
BSP	-	-	-	-	-	8.54	19.3	9.35	12.65	3.84	7.67
Akali Dal (M)	-	-	-	-	-	33.42	-	3.90	2.73	3.41	3.79
Independents /Others	17.01	4.50	3.85	7.59	8.85	-	4.80	9.36	5.53	6.50	5.27

Source: *Election Commission of India*, New Delhi.

* It is the combined vote share of Akali Dal (Sant) and Akali Dal (Master), which had secured 22.61 and 4.42 per cent respectively.

** The major factions of Akali Dal had boycotted the elections. Only Akali Dal (Kabul) participated in these elections.

*** The former Jan Sangh/ Janata Party.

The 1996 Lok Sabha elections in Punjab were the first 'normal' elections after a long period of political turmoil in the State. These brought the democratic competitive politics back to the state's political arena. This time, the Congress could win only two seats and the Akali Dal got eight seats despite the fact that the former got 6.38 per cent more votes than the latter. The gap in the Akali vote share and the number of seats they won was due to the fact of their being in alliance with the BSP, which got three seats with 9.35 per cent of votes. It is pertinent to note that, over the years, the political alliances had undergone a change in response to the changed moods of the people. During the last decade, the urban Hindu voters had moved away from the Akalis. Therefore, the Akalis found it appropriate to forge an alliance with the BSP, which had substantial influence in the Doaba and border areas of Punjab. The past emotional and identity-related issues were swept under the carpet. The matters which now mattered were: the 'peace, brotherhood, communal harmony, socio-economic welfare, all-round development and sustainable and profitable agriculture through diversification' [*The Tribune*: 2002]. The Akali Dal also carried the moderation of its politics to the higher degree by opening its membership to the non-Sikhs. During this election, the Akali leader, Badal,

was referred in a Conference as '*Hindu-Sikh Ekta Da Masiha*' [the prophet of Hindu-Sikh unity]. On the other hand, the rampant corruption and infighting and nepotism within the Congress were the major factors responsible for the party's poor performance.

The country witnessed a mid-term Lok Sabha election during 1998. Punjab seemed to be the only state during this election where anti-incumbency factor did not matter much. Prior to it, the Akali-BJP alliance had won the 1997 Punjab Assembly election and was ruling the State. It may be mentioned here that the politics of populism was introduced in the politics of Punjab during the 1997 Assembly election. Since then, it has emerged as an important characteristic of party manifestos in the State. The Akali-BJP alliance had promised to provide a clean, corruption-free and efficient regime. The other promises included free water and free power for farmers, increase in power generation, more employment avenues, construction of houses for the poor, '*Shagun*' of Rs. 5000 to *Dalit* girls at the time of their marriage, the abolition of octroi and simplification of sales tax. The Congress too did not lag behind in making tall populist promises. In fact, it was the Congress that had begun wasting public money on populist schemes during its last year of government under the Chief Ministership of Rajinder Kaur Bhattal. She had taken a number of populist decisions like providing free travelling to old age women in buses in the State. The same story was repeated in the Lok Sabha elections. The year 1998 saw the consolidation of the Akali-BJP alliance as the combine won all the 11 seats that it contested. Besides, the two other seats were also won by the Akali-supported candidates. The Akali Dal had supported the Janata Dal's candidate, Inder Kumar Gujral, from Jalandhar constituency as he, in his short stint as the Prime Minister of India, had waved Punjab's loan of Rs 8500 crore due to the Centre, which the State had incurred in the Sikh militancy era. The second seat was won by the candidate of BSM [Bahujan Samaj Morcha] that too with the support of the Akali Dal-led by Badal. The BSM is a breakaway group of the BSP [Bahujan Samaj party]. The Congress was mauled badly as, like the 1977 Lok Sabha elections, it failed to open its account. The factionalism and internal fighting among the party leaders were considered as the major reasons for the Congress debacle in the state. The peace card alone failed to sustain the tempo in favour of the party for long. The Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, could not make any dent in the invincible Akali-BJP duo's influence. Her regret for Operation Blue Star and 1984 anti-Sikh riots failed to win back the sizeable Sikh voters, who had been alienated from the party [Ahuja 2000: 164].

The distinguishing feature of 1999 Lok Sabha elections in Punjab was

the re-emergence of the Congress as it managed to win eight seats this time. The Akalis could win only two and their alliance partner, the BJP, could win only one seat. The victory of the Congress gave a clear indication that the Sikhs in the state were no longer averse to vote for the Congress, which was considered as an outcast after Operation Blue-Star and 1984 anti-Sikh riots. Unlike earlier elections, the major focus of parties remained on the local issues and 'development'. Even the pro-radical Akali leader, Simranjit Singh Mann, announced that the issue of Khalistan would not be raised. Rather, he preached Hindu-Sikh unity and talked about Hindus as being the 'backbone of Punjab' [Rana 2000: 299]. The rout of the Akali-BJP combine at the hands of the Congress in 1999 parliamentary elections in Punjab showed the disenchantment of the people with the State's ruling combine. One of the issues, that tilted the balance against Badal, was free electricity to farmers. It may, or may not, have earned the farmers' support for the Akali Dal, but definitely angered all other sections for whom the electricity rates were increased. The factors that contributed to the Congress's victory in 1999 Lok Sabha election in Punjab included: the anti incumbency wave, the split in the Akali support base due to break up of the party⁵ and polarization of the weaker sections, who were disillusioned from the Akali-BJP government, in favour of the Congress. There was resentment among the senior Akali leaders. Besides, the rural *Dalit* voters also supported the Congress. Over the years, the Congress was able to win its traditional support base of *Dalits* that had been weaned away by the BSP.

The 2004 Lok Sabha elections in Punjab showed a reversal in the pro-Congress trend in the state as the Akali-BJP duo got eleven seats, eight and three respectively, while the Congress had to contend with only two. In other words, the reunited Akali Dal was able to bounce back in the state politics by routing the Congress, which was at the helm of affairs in the state at that time. The merger of Tohra's SHSAD [Sarv Hind Shiromani Akali Dal] into the Akali Dal [Badal] had paid rich political dividends to the Akalis. On the other hand, the BSP was the major factor leading to the defeat of Congress-Left Front candidates in five constituencies, in which its candidates polled over one lakh votes each. The Simranjit Singh Mann's Akali Dal was unable to win any seat. As for the electoral issues, both, the Akali Dal [Badal] and the Congress, harped on the corruption plank to tarnish the image of each other. Moreover,

5. A substantial section of the Akali Dal, including fourteen sitting MLAs, under the leadership of Gurcharan Singh Tohra, had separated from the ruling faction of Parkash Singh Badal. The Tohra-led group was named as Sarb Hind Shiromani Akali Dal [SHSAD].

the politics of hatred, vendetta and revenge was introduced in the Punjab politics. Among other factors, the voters' anguish over the Congress giving tickets in Delhi to candidates implicated in the anti-Sikh riots in 1984 went against the Congress in the Sikh majority state [Kumar 2004: 5442]. Besides, the discontent with the performance of Amarinder Singh government was most glaring among the farming community at that time. The unity between the Akali factions and internal dissension between the Chief Minister, Amarinder Singh, and the Deputy Chief Minister, Rajinder Kaur Bhattal, was also a factor that reversed the poll fortunes of the chief players.

To conclude, the history of Lok Sabha elections, like that of the Vidhan Sabha, in Punjab shows the predominance of the Congress party and the Shiromani Akali Dal. However, the Akalis compete with the Congress successfully only when they are able to form alliance with other non-Congress parties, particularly, the BJP.

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PUNJAB WATERS : A SENSITIVE POLITICAL ISSUE

*Jashandeep Singh Sandhu**

"Next Century's wars will be over water rather than oil. Without immediate rationing measures, next century's wars will focus on that clear liquid which so many still take for granted."¹

United Nations Food & Drug Administration report indicates that water consumption doubles every 21 years, provide an idea of the international tensions that the struggle for control of water resources could unleash. Ismail Serageldin, Vice President of the World Bank in 1995 commented that, "The Big problem in the future for poor nations will not be shortage of arable land, but rather a lack of water."

And it is important for agricultural economy of India because Agriculture accounts for 60% of annual water consumption.

The World Bank report pointed out at the alarming situation. In the 21st Century and 14 years since the World Bank Report was published, we are witnessing some of the indication of the things to come.

- Quillagua, a Chilean city that holds the distinction of being the driest place on this earth, is dying a parched death. Their lifeline river is dying.
- United Nations Development Reports are warning the world that Water Wars are on the horizon in Africa.
- Australia is a decade into the worst drought it has witnessed in a century.

And that tells the story as it is despite all the deniers. Today water is fast becoming a resource that is all set to rival oil for value.

The Water and hydel power issues have assumed global importance with each and every country and every part of the world is trying to secure this valuable commodity.

Water and hydel power issues are also very important with respect to the agricultural state of Punjab. If we go into the genesis of this whole issue the first important stage in this regard is the famous Indus Waters Treaty of 1960.

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1. World Bank Report, *The Tribune*, August 23, 1995. p. 14.

The Indus Water Treaty is a water-sharing treaty between the Republic of India and Republic of Pakistan. The treaty was signed in Karachi on September 19, 1960 by the then Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the then President of Pakistan Field Marshal Mohammad Ayub Khan. The World Bank (then the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) is a signatory as a third party.

The Indus Waters Treaty was the outcome of eight years of discussion and negotiation between the Governments of India and Pakistan carried on under the auspices of the World Bank.

The waters of the Indus basin begin in the Himalayan mountains of Indian held Kashmir. They flow from the hills through the states of Punjab and Sind, converging in Pakistan and emptying in the Arabian Sea, south of Karachi. Where once there was only a narrow strip of irrigated land along these rivers, developments over the last century have created a large network of canals and storage facilities that provide water for more than 26 million acres – the largest irrigated area of any one river system in the world.

The partition of the Indian subcontinent created a conflict over the plentiful waters of the Indus basin. The newly formed states were at odds over how to share and manage what was essentially a cohesive and unitary network of irrigation. The political boundary between the two new countries was drawn right across the Indus basin, leaving India the up-stream, and Pakistan the down-stream, riparian on five of the six rivers in the Indus system. Moreover, two important irrigation headworks, one at Madhopur on the River Ravi, and one at Ferozepur on the River Sutlej, on which two irrigation canals in West Punjab had been completely dependent for their supplies, were left in Indian territory. Pakistan felt its livelihood threatened by the prospect of Indian control over the tributaries that fed water into the Pakistani portion of the basin. Pakistan even wanted to take the matter to the International Court of Justice but India refused, arguing that the conflict required a bilateral resolution.

"India and Pakistan can go on shouting on Kashmir for all time to come, but an early settlement on the Indus waters is essential for maintenance of peace in the sub-continent", reported to have said by persons in authority in London and Washington.²

In February, 1951, David E Lilienthal, formerly the Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority and of the US Atomic Energy Commission, visited the region to write a series of articles for Colliers magazine. Lilienthal had a

2. N.D. Gulhati, *Indus Waters Treaty: An Exercise in International Mediation*, Allied Publishers, India, 1973, p. 16.

keen interest in the subcontinent and was welcomed by the highest levels of both Indian and Pakistani governments. During the course of his visit, it became clear to Lilienthal that tensions between India and Pakistan were acute, but also unable to be erased with one sweeping gesture. In the journal he wrote under the title, "Another 'Korea' in the Making" that,

"India and Pakistan were on the verge of war over Kashmir. There seemed to be no possibility of negotiating this issue until tensions abated. One way to reduce hostility... would be to concentrate on other important issues where cooperation was possible. Progress in these areas would promote a sense of community between the two nations which might, in time, lead to a Kashmir settlement... India and Pakistan work out a program jointly to develop and jointly operate the Indus Basin river system, upon which both nations were dependent for irrigation water. With new dams and irrigation canals, the Indus and its tributaries could be made to yield the additional water each country needed for increased food production. In the article I had suggested that the World Bank might use its good offices to bring the parties to agreement, and help in the financing of an Indus Development program.³

Lilienthal's idea was well received by officials at the World Bank, and, subsequently, by the Indian and Pakistani governments. Eugene R. Black, then president of the World Bank told Lilienthal that his proposal "makes good sense all round". Black wrote that the Bank was interested in the economic progress of the two countries and had been concerned that the Indus dispute could only be a serious handicap to this development particularly in the vital section of agriculture and hydro-electric development. Black proposed a Working Party made up of Indian, Pakistani and World Bank engineers. The World Bank delegation would act as a consultative group, charged with offering suggestions and speeding dialogue.

After hectic round of discussions and deliberations, the Treaty was signed. The Treaty comprises of a Preamble, 12 Articles and 8 Annexures.

All the water of the Eastern rivers shall be available for the unrestricted use of India.⁴ The term Eastern Rivers means The Ravi, The Beas and The Sutlej taken together.

Provisions regarding western rivers, Pakistan shall receive for unrestricted use all those waters of the Western Rivers which India is under obligation to let flow.⁵

3. N.D. Gulhati, *Indus Waters Treaty : An Exercise in International Mediation*, Allied Publishers, India, 1973, pp. 93-94.

4. Article II, *The Indus Waters Treaty*, 1960.

5. Article III, *The Indus Waters Treaty*, 1960.

It is logical that water is an inseparable part of the land on which it flows, and the territory being an integral component of the state irrigation and hydel power are state subjects under Item 17 of the state list. This fact is enshrined in our constitution wherein under Article 162 and 246 (3), our constitution gives full and exclusive legislative and executive powers to the States over water and hydel power. Agriculture and Industry being wholly dependent on irrigation and power, these have been kept purely state subject in our constitution. This is common in most of the countries in the world. The Introduction of sections 78 to 80 in the Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966 instead of giving Punjab complete power over water and hydel projects gave powers to the Centre.

These sections of the Punjab Reorganization Act are violative of article 14 of the constitution which ensures equality. The Act on the one side gives exclusive rights of the waters of Yamuna to Haryana, it makes the waters of three exclusively Punjab rivers not only distributable by the Centre but also vests their control with the central government.

Before the Reorganization of Punjab, there was a project called the Beas Project, under which about 0.9MAF waters were supposed to be used in the Haryana area of the erstwhile Punjab, whereas the remaining waters of the Punjab rivers were to be utilized in Punjabi Suba and for which channels etc. had also been dug. But after the reorganization took place in 1966, as Punjab had become non-riparian with respect to Yamuna, similarly Haryana had become non riparian with respect to Ravi, Beas and Sutlej and thus the question of giving even this 0.9MAF waters to Haryana could not arise.

Application of sections 78 to 80 : Control over Punjab rivers established – Before 1966, Punjab was in total control of its rivers and the utilization of their waters and hydel power. The multi-purpose projects in Punjab were controlled by a board. Its Chairman, Secretary, the General Manager and three members were from the Punjab Administration. There were only two members from Rajasthan and one from Himachal Pradesh. This Board and its administration worked under the Punjab Government.⁶ The entire budget and the administration of Punjab projects were controlled and approved by the Punjab Government and its legislature. But after 1966, the Central Government under Sections 78 to 80 constituted a statutory Board which works under the Central Government. The Chairman, two Working members and two other members are appointed by the Centre and one member each is taken from

6. Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966, pp. 38-39.

Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan.⁷

The important fact is that whereas earlier every employee of the multipurpose projects was an employee of the Punjab Government, hence forward everyone has become an employee of the Central Government. Thus, the entire control, administration, functioning and development of the Punjab rivers and their hydel power have been taken over by centre.

S.Y.L. and Indira Gandhi Canals : Before 1966, there was not the least indication that Haryana would have a project for the use of 4 to 5 M.A.F. of waters of the Punjab rivers. Yet without reference to Punjab which is the riparian owner of the rivers, Haryana made a scheme for the use of 4 to 5 M.A.F. of Punjab waters. The proposed channel is to be linked with a canal from Yamuna waters and by lift irrigation, water is to be used in the table lands and other areas in the Yamuna basin of Haryana. On the basis of this Scheme, called the Sutlej-Yamuna Link Canal, which Haryana had got approved from Delhi, it put a claim with the Centre for allocation to it of Punjab Waters. Punjab seriously objected to it, the Scheme being beyond the scope of the Beas Project and for that matter beyond the purview of Section 78, which related only to the two multi-purpose projects of Punjab i.e. Bhakhra and Beas Projects.

In 1976, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi gave the Award that out of the available 15.2 M.A.F. of the waters of Ravi, Beas and Sutlej, Punjab and Haryana would get 3.5 M.A.F. each and Delhi 0.2 M.A.F. The remaining 8 M.A.F. were unilaterally earmarked by the Centre for Rajasthan, another non-riparian State, unconcerned with the Punjab Reorganization Act of 1966.⁸ These 8 M.A.F. were considered to have been allotted by the Centre under an executive order of Shri G.L. Nanda as Central Minister of Irrigation. In 1955, he had without any concurrence of the Punjab Government, allocated them to Rajasthan. The award required the laying of a 214 km long Sutlej-Yamuna link (S.Y.L.) canal, of which 122 kms had to be dug in the Punjab and the remaining 92 kms in Haryana.

Another major irritant is the construction of Indira Gandhi Canal for diverting 8 M.A.F. (later 8.6 M.A.F.) of water to Rajasthan. The Centre approached the World Bank for a loan to construct this Canal. The World Bank sent a team of experts to assess its feasibility and productivity. The team was headed by David E. Lilienthal. He gave the report, "Viewed realistically

7. Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966, pp. 38-39.

8. Prime Minister's Award of March 24, 1976.

the Rajasthan Project in its ultimate form is a dubious one...The ideal of extending the Rajasthan Canal parallel to the Indo-Pakistan border in the northern portion of the Thar Desert down to a point about opposite the Sukkur Barrage was a seductive one..."⁹

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation severely criticized India for wanting to undertake an irrigation scheme in desert lands. They warned that the consequences of persisting with the project from the technical and economic point of view would be plain frustration. And yet we find that out of 15.2 M.A.F. Punjab rivers waters, 8 M.A.F. remained ear-marked for non-riparian Rajasthan, and later actually 8.6 M.A.F. were allotted to it. The net result is that out of 15.2 M.A.F. only 3.5 M.A.F. were given to riparian Punjab and the rest were managed to be diverted to non-riparian States. It is significant to note that the same Rajasthan applied to the Narmada tribunal for water of that river. Its request was rejected outright because Rajasthan was non-riparian in regard to river Narmada.

Case withdrawn from the Supreme Court : In 1978, when an Akali Ministry was in power in the State and the Janta Ministry was at the Centre, the Akali Dal filed a case before the Supreme Court, seeking a verdict on the constitutionality of Sections 78 to 80 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act. In 1980, Indira Gandhi returned to power at the centre. At the time there were Congress Ministries in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. She called the Chief Ministers of the three States and virtually got the allotment under her Award made. The allocations made under this Award were as under:

Haryana (non-riparian)	=	3.50 M.A.F.
Rajasthan (non-riparian)	=	8.60 M.A.F.
Delhi (non-riparian)	=	0.20 M.A.F.
Punjab (riparian)	=	4.22 M.A.F.
Jammu and Kashmir (riparian)	=	0.65 M.A.F.
Total	=	17.17 M.A.F. ¹⁰

There is a public report that the Punjab Chief Minister Darbara Singh was made to sign the above Agreement virtually under a threat. Haryana CM, Bhajan Lal was happy to get his share for Haryana because Haryana was going to Assembly Elections at that time. Under the Agreement, BBMB was to control headworks. 'The control of the Ropar, Ferozepur and Harike Pattan

9. Aloys Arthur Michel, *The Indus Rivers ; A Study of the Effects of Partition*, Yale University Press, 1967, pp. 330-32.

10. Government of Punjab, *Ravi-Beas Agreement, 1981, White Paper* (Chandigarh, 1982), Annexure II.

headworks will pass from Punjab to the Bhakhra-Beas Management Board authorities under the accord on the sharing of the Ravi-Beas Waters signed in Delhi.¹¹ Indira Gandhi after the signing of agreement proceeded to inaugurate the S.Y.L. Canal at Kapuri, Patiala District.

Akali Dal (L) leader, Surjit Singh Barnala described the Ravi-Beas waters agreement as harmful to Punjab. According to him several areas of Punjab would be rendered arid as a result of this agreement.¹²

Sardar Parkash Singh Badal, leader of opposition in Punjab Assembly stated that "The divisible surplus water was of the order of 15.85 M.A.F. It was being shown to be 17.17 M.A.F. only to deceive the farmers of Punjab."¹³

The Chief Minister of Punjab, Sardar Darbara Singh hailed this agreement and stated that though Haryana's share of waters remain at 3.5 M.A.F., Punjab's share has risen from 3.5 M.A.F. of 1976 Award to 4.22 M.A.F.¹⁴

Chief Justice Transferred : In 1983, a farmers' organisation from Punjab filed a writ in the Punjab and Haryana High Court on the ground of the unconstitutionality of Sections 78 to 80 of the Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966, and the diversion of Punjab waters, which were badly needed in the State, to non-riparian States. After some preliminary argument, Chief Justice S.S. Sandhawalia constituted a full Bench with himself as a Presiding Judge. He announced the order on the last working day of the week and fixed the case of hearing on the following Monday (25.11.1983). But before the hearing of the case could start, in the intervening holidays, two things happened. Chief Justice Sandhawalia was transferred from Punjab and Haryana High Court Chandigarh, to Patna High Court.¹⁵ Secondly, the Attorney General made an oral application to the Supreme Court that the case was of importance and should be transferred from the file of the Punjab and Haryana High Court to that of the Supreme Court. The request was granted and the case transferred to the file of the Supreme Court.¹⁶

During the Congress regime with Sardar Darbara Singh as CM the case was withdrawn from Supreme Court and an agreement was signed which led to retaliation by Akalis in the form of *Nehar Roko* (Stop the canal) agitation and subsequently leading to *Dharam Yudh Morcha* and further unspiralling of

11. *The Tribune*, January 1, 1982, p. 1.

12. *The Tribune*, January 1, 1982, p. 11.

13. *The Tribune*, January 2, 1982, p. 8.

14. *The Tribune*, January 3, 1982, p. 3.

15. *The Tribune*, November 30, December 1-2, 1983.

16. *Indian Express*, November 26-27, 1983.

violent events. In the case of Akali Party they have taken up the issue of the unconstitutionality of sections 78 to 80 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act to Supreme Court in the year 1978, when Sardar Parkash Singh Badal was Chief Minister. Why did they take so long, almost 12 years and did not file the case challenging the constitutionality of sections 78 to 80 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act in the year 1966 when Akalis have formed the Government under Justice Gurnam Singh or under Lachhman Singh Gill (1967-68) or during Chief Ministership of Sardar Parkash Singh Badal (1970-71). Whatever the case may be the issue of Water and Hydel Power Projects remain close to Punjab and have to be safeguarded at all cost for the progress and development of Punjab, until then it continues to remain a sensitive political issue.

SYED MUHAMMAD LATIF : A HISTORIAN OF PUNJAB

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It is aptly said that good historians may be born, but true historians are made.¹ This statement is best suited for Syed Muhammad Latif to whom "the great end of History is the exact illustration of events as they occurred. There should neither be exaggeration nor concealment to suit angry feelings or personal disappointment."² To invigorate his beliefs he further adds, "History should contain the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."³ During the nineteenth century only one great historical work in the Punjab appeared about the Punjab history in English and it was by Syed Muhammad Latif who was a Punjabi Historian.

Syed Muhammad Latif was born in 1847,⁴ two years before the annexation of Punjab. He belonged to an esteemed Syed Community of the Muslims. He received liberal education. He knew Persian, Urdu, Punjabi and English languages, and used mostly Persian and English sources in his works. He was appointed as extra-judicial Assistant Commissioner with a salary of five hundred rupees.⁵ For his meritorious services, he was conferred titles of 'Khan Bahadur' in 1892⁶ and 'Shams-ul-Ulema' in 1897. For a short period he acted as the Divisional Judge of Lahore and Hoshiarpur.⁷ He held his post till the beginning of 1901 and worked at almost all the important places of the Punjab viz. Lahore, Jalandhar, Gujranwalla, Multan, Hoshiarpur and Gurdaspur.⁸

Syed Muhammad Latif was a liberal Muslim. His friends included not only Muslims but non-Muslims also. Some of them were selected to

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1. Peter Geyl, *Use and Abuse in History*, Delhi, p. 32.

2. Syed, Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Calcutta, 1891, p. VI.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

4. *The Punjab Civil List - 1889*, Vol. I, January-March, p. 3.

5. S.P. Sen (ed.), *Historians and Historiography in Modern India*, Calcutta, 1973, p. 255.

6. *The Punjab Civil List, 1892*, Vol. III, July-October, p. 5.

7. The Secretary of States dispatch to Governor-General of India, September, 1898, p. 3.

8. S.P. Sen (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 235.

clergy. It is presumed that he was a very close friend of Nur Muhammad Chisti and Rai Bahadur Kanahiya Lal, the two prominent personalities of the time.⁹ He wrote in his preface, the names of his friends and gave special thanks to them. He wrote, "I have also to thank many kind friends." His friends also had a fair aptitude for history.

Like most of his contemporary English-educated Indian officials, he was liberal and well aware of the movement of modernization of Indian communities, and like all Muslims of his caste, he traced his genealogy back to Prophet Muhammad. He was not a religious bigot. As an educated person of a less educated community as compared to other communities, he realized his responsibility to assist his brethren in the struggle for their identity. While working under the pressure of these two major realities he, through his writings, made them complementary to each other. He followed the principles of Sir Syed Ahmad.¹⁰ Syed Muhammad Latif was not only a government official but also a genius and a person responsible to his community. He was a member of various provincial and national associations. As being a Punjabi he was the member of '*Anjuman-i-Punjab*'¹¹ a provincial association of Liberal Punjabis and on national level he was a member of the '*Bengal Asiatic Society*'. As an academician, he was a fellow (Modern Senate Member of University) of the Panjab University of Lahore.¹² Syed Muhammad Latif probably died in 1902. The Bazar inside Bhatti Gate, Lahore in Pakistani Punjab is named after his death as "Bazar Judge Muhammad Latif."¹³

Scholarship of Syed Muhammad Latif in the field of History of Punjab is well known. Syed Muhammad Latif has left to us three valuable contributions. Two of them trace the history, architecture and antiquity of Lahore and Multan and the third is a comprehensive study of the history of Punjab. But recent researchers have brought forth the fact that he also wrote a fourth book, '*History of Agra : Historical and Descriptive*', with an account of Akbar and his court and of the modern city of Agra.¹⁴ Two

9. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

11. Nazer Singh, 'Anjum-i-Ishaat-i-Alum-i-Mufida-i-Punjab, 1877-87', *Proceedings of Punjab History Conference*, Oct., 1983, p. 11. It was a regional institution of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, supposed to work for common and composite heritage of the communities as well as of the Indian subcontinent.

12. Syed Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

14. V.A. Smith, *Akbar - The Great Mughal (1542-1605)*, Oxford, 1917, p. 109.

years after his appointment, he published '*History of the Punjab*' from Calcutta, a copy of which was recommended by the Punjab Government for presentation to Queen Empress of India with the following remarks.¹⁵

"Sir James Lyall considers that the work in question is an exceedingly meritorious one, and it is notable as being the first work of its kind in English language produced by a native of Punjab." The Book was dispatched for acceptance of the Crown on 8th September, 1891.¹⁶

Syed Muhammad Latif firstly wrote in Urdu about the History of Punjab and History of Lahore, with titles '*Tarikh-i-Punjab*' and '*Tarikh-i-Lahaur*'¹⁷ respectively. Syed Muhammad Latif's '*History of the Punjab*' is an important piece of historical work based mainly on English, Urdu and Persian original sources. About the sources of this work Syed Muhammad Latif clearly writes in the preface of his book. He also mentions the names of sources which were used by him. He writes, "I am indebted to the excellent works of Dr. Hunter, General Cunningham, McCrindle, Dunken, Thomas Murice, Ludlow, Tavernier and the Rev. Mr. Hunter."¹⁸ For different themes in his book Latif uses different sources viz. in writing about the Muhammadan period, the *Akbarnama* of Sheikh Abul Fazl, *Tabakat-i-Akbari* of Moulana Nizamuddin Ahmad, the *Ain-i-Akbari* by Professor Blochmann, the *Siar-ul-Mutakhirin* of Mir Gulam Hussein Khan, the *Badshahnama* of Mulla Abdul Hamid of Lahore, the *Ikbalnama-i-Jahangiri* of Mutamid Khan, the *Alamgirnama* of Muhammad Kazim, and the *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* of Muhammad Saki, were also consulted.¹⁹ For Sikh History he heavily depends upon English sources. Making a mention of his sources he remarks, "I am obliged to the works of Sir John Malcom, McGregor, Cunningham, Prinsep, Smyth, Lepel Griffin, Dr. Honighbergher and Dr. Trumpp's translation of the *Adi Granth*."²⁰

The author treats the Sikh wars and other problems of socio-political structure from the perspective of a British official only and even makes use of Latin tags.²¹ The second portion of Sikh History is based on

15. From the Government of Punjab to Government of India, 24 August 1891, *Home Public Affairs*, September, 1891, 33-A, p. 34.

16. From the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, 1891, p. 40.

17. Ganda Singh, *Bibliography of the Punjab*, Patiala, 1988, p. 184.

18. Syed Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. VII.

19. *Ibid.*, p. VII.

20. *Ibid.*, p. VIII.

21. C.H. Phillip (ed.), *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, London, 1967, p. 324.

other English sources. He remarks "I am highly indebted to the history of Punjab by Thornton, Nolan's *British Empire*, Kayl's *Sepoy War* and J. Cave-Brown—Brown, 1857."²² Like a brilliant historian Latif used official reports for this work. Especially the excellent works of Mr. Baden-Powell for the Chapter of Trade and Industry.²³

Describing about the aborigines of Punjab and the customs of the Hindus, and for the statistical portion of the history he uses reliable official reports drawn up by Mr. Denzil J. Ibbetson, Rai Kanahiya Lal's '*History of Punjab*' in Urdu and Dewan Ram Nath's Father Dewan Amar Nath's manuscript called '*Khalsa Dewan*'.²⁴ At the same time, he ignored various important Gurmukhi sources of Sikh history. Contemporary historiography reflects two kinds of attitudes based on the grim struggle between the Muslims and the Sikhs. He did not use the *janam-sakhis*, the Sikh sources of history of the Sikh Gurus, since these were biased, and coloured accounts written in defence of the Gurus.²⁵ Latif opines that he rejected them as an inadequate material. Only those *janam-sakhis* which are quoted by Malcolm, McGregor and Trump have been used by Latif as the sources of information for the period of Guru Nanak.²⁶

What is even more important is that he did not consult any primary source for his treatment of *Khalsa*. In professing impartiality between various nationalities and creeds relating to the history of Punjab, Latif appears to assume that facts speak for themselves and self assumptions of the historian should not enter his interpretation. He was inclined to ascribe greater credibility to Muslim writings rather than Sikh writings even in relation to Sikh history.²⁷

The contemporary writings which were used by Syed Muhammad Latif, were not the common men's writings. All these writings were mostly taken up because of the possible prejudices of government officers. The source material amply demonstrated the aspects that the official historians found justification of the British Rule in the Punjab. Accounts of Punjab by

22. Syed Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. VII.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 248.

24. S.P. Sen (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 235.

25. J.S. Grewal (ed.), *The Khalsa; Sikh and Non-Sikh Perspective*, p. 140.

26. S.K. Bajaj, 'British Historians of the Sikhs', *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, New Delhi, 1969-70, p. 162.

27. J.S. Grewal, *Contesting Interpretations of the Sikh Tradition*, New Delhi, 1998, p. 23.

Indians closely follow the pattern and style of medieval chronicles, while the works of the Europeans were not objective.

Syed Muhammad Latif highlighted the English and Persian sources in his work. He mainly depended upon the English sources along with some Persian and Urdu sources. He mainly relied on secondary English sources; Sir Lepel Griffin's, *The Punjab Chiefs, Rajas of Punjab*; Joseph Davey Cunningham's, *A History of the Sikhs*; H.T. Prinsep's, *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* etc. Lepel Griffin, and other European Historians held British absolutely innocent, rather made special efforts to place the blame squarely on the Khalsa Army.²⁸

Joseph Davey Cunningham was the first British writer to have some understanding of Sikh literature such as *Adi Granth, the Vars of Bhai Gurdas, Dasam Granth* and *Rahitnamas*.²⁹ He was also an Engineer and later he was selected as a Political Agent of the company on North-West frontier. For the life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, he depends upon Henry T. Prinsep's : *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*. This account starts with the narration of Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739 A.D. and ends with the year 1833 A.D. Henry T. Prinsep mainly depended upon the reports of Captain Murray and Captain Wade, assistant of the political agent. This account is a mere representation of British view point.³⁰ In John Malcolm's, *A Sketch of the Sikhs*, published in the first decade of nineteenth century, he wrote about the Sikh politics.³¹ John Malcolm's *Sketch of the Sikhs* is of a better quality than earlier works. Malcolm's own observations bring out the difference clearly and aptly. The superior merit of Malcolm's work lies in the richness of its information and better organization of its material.³²

Syed Muhammad Latif also uses W.L. McGregor's *The History of Sikhs*, two volumes, for the history of Ranjit Singh. McGregor was a doctor. He was closely associated with Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In his account McGregor used many opportunities that he had availed to his close contacts with the Maharaja.³³

28. Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, Patiala, 2001, p. 279.

29. J.S. Grewal, *Miscellaneous Articles*, Amritsar, 1974, p. 254.

30. Fauja Singh (ed.), *Historians and Historiography of the Sikhs*, New Delhi, 1978, p. 152.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

Another English source which is used by Latif for Ranjit Singh's period is Major G. Carmichael Smyth's *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore Darbar*, with some account of the Jammu Rajahs, the Sikh soldiers and their Sardars (1847).³⁴

In this book he shows the political condition of the Lahore Darbar. Smyth also describes about the products of Punjab, its trees, shrubs, population, and political boundaries, numerical strength of the Sikh Army etc.³⁵ The importance of Smith's work is that he has been heavily depending upon scholars, both Europeans and Indians.³⁶ He was critical of the British Indian Government which he thought, was hesitant, for fear of public opinion back at home, to pursue an aggressive policy towards Punjab.³⁷

The works like that of Col. Steinbach's, *The Punjab Adventurers* and Carmichael Smyth's *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore Darbar*, were also used by Latif. He called them familiar and able works.³⁸ Moreover, a perusal of these works discloses a uniformity in the accounts related to Sikh period, especially where the authors, having no access to the official records, depended on native sources of information. Syed Muhammad Latif also mentioned names of some original Urdu and Persian sources which were used by him for this work. From the list of authorities given for the Sikh period in his preface, it can be inferred that he made use of *A History of the Reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, *Zafar Namah-i-Ranjit Singh* written by Rai Kanahiya Lal in Urdu³⁹ which contains little that is original.⁴⁰ Except in the last three paragraphs on the character of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Latif avoids generalization, and even ideas and reflections.⁴¹

In Persian sources Latif mentioned names of Sohan Lal Suri, Dewan Amar Nath, and Moulvi Din Muhammad. About Sohan Lal Suri's *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* or *Diary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh* written in Persian, Latif thought that, "It would have been a useful work for reference if it

34. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

35. Harbans Singh, *The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism*, p. 103.

36. Syed Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. V.

37. S.P. Sen, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

38. Syed Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. VI.

39. Prithipal Singh Kapur, Dharam Singh (eds.), *Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Commemoration Volume, 1801-2001*, Patiala, p. 260.

40. Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. VI.

41. *Ibid.*, p. VIII.

were not touched in a hyperbolic style and loaded with fiction."⁴² Latif has also used Dewan Amar Nath's *Khalsa Dewan* (Persian Manuscript). Dewan Amar Nath was the father of his friend Dewan Ram Nath.

With due respect to Moulavi Din Muhammad, Latif writes, "I had also the privilege of using Moulavi Din Muhammad's *History of Punjab*, manuscript which was lent to me by his son Munshi Ghulam Farid Khan, Extra Assistant Commissioner."⁴³ It is clear that Latif mostly depended upon English sources, mainly written by administrative and other Government Officials. The main reason of this was that Latif himself was a Government Officer. No doubt the records of these government officials were quite authentic as they wrote on personal observation and interest. However, his writings were new but not colourless. Although it is impossible for any individual to avoid personal ingredient in his writings, more so for an administrator.⁴⁴ Dersett's simple observation is significant to note in this connection. He observes "Administrators as a class, have made a marked contribution to historical writings, as indeed to history itself and it has not proved difficult to expose their principal bias, induced by their connection with the government and the predispositions and taste of their English Public."⁴⁵ He highlighted the English sources. "Considering the aridity and unsympathetic and unsynthetic quality of most British historians of India, this can be considered at least equally important."⁴⁶

Though Persian and Urdu being his native languages, yet he utilized a few of these sources for his work. Except for Sohan Lal Suri's Persian work, Latif did not use the Indian authors because they were hyperbolic in style and fiction-loaded in account. Latif ignored various important English, Urdu, Persian and Gurmukhi sources. Nevertheless he did not compare some other contemporary sources, viz. Major James Browne's *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs*. Browne was the first writer to attempt writing a connected account of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs.⁴⁷ Browne's '*History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs*' marked the beginning of modern historical writing on Sikhs. George Forster wrote a more meaningful account of the Sikhs. He was a Civil Servant of the East

42. *Ibid.*, p. VII.

43. C.H. Philips (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 199.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

45. J.S. Grewal (ed.), *The Khalsa : Sikh and Non Sikh Perspectives*, p. 25.

46. Fauja Singh (ed.), *Historians and Historiography of the Sikhs*, p. 13.

47. S.P. Sen (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 235.

India Company. His work was published into two volumes from London in 1798 A.D. under the title, *A Journey from Bengal to England*.⁴⁸ In his account of these extraordinary people he refers to Sikh records as well as to European sources.

Syed Muhammad Latif did not give any importance to Gurmukhi sources, which he has not used even once. These sources are mainly related to Sikh Gurus' lives and their achievements. He opined that the *janam-sakhis* and Sikh sources of the history of the Gurus are full of fictions and legends. Therefore, he does not attach much historical value to them.

Like many of his contemporaries, he saw much common parallel between the interests of British rule in India and the Muslims of India. He was a member of an association of liberal Punjabis named *Anjuman-i-Punjab*. So he, like all other liberals, found redemption of his fellow brethren in the continuation of the British rule in India.⁴⁹ His admiration for the British values and their modern institutions, Latif went to quite absurd lengths to prove that British rule in India was nothing but beneficial. Latif was not consciously trying to save the British Empire in India nor was he writing for their fame. About the main cause which inspired Latif for this work, he himself writes, "I felt impelled to narrate my countrymen the story of the land of their birth, from the remotest antiquity to recent times; based on historical truth; and free from parity spirit or sectarian prejudice."⁵⁰ Inspired by his association with writers in Indian languages and well informed of the historical literature produced by the Europeans, he presents in himself a reasonable synthesis of the two. This style and perception is radically different from his contemporaries.⁵¹ Latif wrote the History of the Punjab, as he tells us, to meet a need which had long been felt for a complete history of the Punjab. In the works of the British writers, one could find the history only of Sikhs, or of the Sikh period. Before Latif there was nothing about the pre-Sikh, and the Hindu and pre-Hindu periods, just as there was nothing about the British period.⁵²

Latif appealed to the reason, the conscience and the good taste of his fellow countrymen to draw the right conclusion from his facts. Latif

48. Syed Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. VI.

49. S.P. Sen (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 238.

50. Prithipal Singh Kapur, Dharam Singh (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 260.

51. S.S. Bal, *Guru Nanak in the Eyes of the Non-Sikhs*, Chandigarh, 1969, p. 144.

52. Syed Muhammad Latif, *op. cit.*, p. 240.

also wants the reader to remember that the original writers were men who occupied a very low position in scale of civilization and whose education and mode of life were far inferior to those of the growing generation. S.S. Bal remarks that as a historian he is generally believed to be appreciative of the Gurus.⁵³

Syed Muhammad Latif combined in his personality three inbuilt characteristics; he was an Indian, a Muslim and an official of the British Indian administration. Therefore, while passing any judgement about Latif as a historian, it is necessary to keep in mind the political situation and social age he lived in. Despite many limitations Latif's work is a pioneer of its own kind. It may be considered as a milestone in the nineteenth century Indian Historiography. It gives for the first time a complete account from the remotest antiquity of the Punjab till the annexation of the same into the British rule.

53. *Op. cit.*, p. 241.

HEALTH PROBLEMS OF THE RURAL AND URBAN AGED

*Maninder Singh Randhawa**

It is generally believed that as a person grows older, the problems faced by him get multiplied. During the life span an individual passes through various stages like infancy, childhood, adulthood, middle age and then old age. Charles S. Becker says that deftness aging in the broadest sense, "Are those changes occurring in an individual as the result of the passage of time. These may be anatomical, physiological, psychological and even social and economic". He further adds that aging consists of two simultaneous components, i.e. anabolic means building up and catabolic which means breaking down. The first two decades of life are predominantly anabolic. In the middle years there is an essential balance between expansion and decay, while growth predominates in youth, degenerative changes which stage occurring very early in life predominate in the late life span (Becker Charles, 1959:9) Apart from other problems another important problem faced by aged people both in rural and urban areas is with regard to their physical health. Physical health of a person decreases with the increasing age. Old age is generally accompanied by a deterioration of health because aging process leads to lesser and lesser resistance in the body to fight diseases. According to Elhel Shanas and George L. Maddox "health and illness effect an individual's performance of basic personal tasks of daily living and of expected roles. Impairment and disability increase the probability of failure in carrying out tasks and social roles; and such failures in turn increases dependency which particularly for adults, challenges widely shared personal and social expectations and preferences for independence. Moreover, less of autonomy tends to have a negative effect on self evaluation and life satisfaction. Illness also exacts economic costs in terms at both cost opportunities for productive work and charges for health services required to restore functioning. Health is thus both a key personal resource for any individual and social concern, because performance of social roles in economic, kinship and community organizations requires in individual who can function competently" (Shanas and Maddox, 1976 : 592).

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In the present paper the main emphasis is given on health conditions of the rural and urban aged; such as their perception about health problems; nature of ailments; physical difficulties; who looks after them during their illness; need for medical treatment; mode for payment of their treatment. The analysis with regard to above said aspects of health conditions of the aged in rural and urban areas has been highlighted in the present paper.

Methodology

For the present study patiala district of Punjab was selected purposively due to the time and financial constraints of the researchers. Both the Urban as well as rural respondents were selected from within Patiala district only. The procedure adopted for drawing samples was as follows :

Urban Sample

For the purpose of drawing a sample from patiala city, it was divided into two types of areas: (i) areas within the old walled city (ii) Newly established colonies. The assumption in doing so was that areas within the walled city will have a larger proportion of families belonging to middle and lower economic status categories whereas the high status families will be found mostly in newly established colonies. It was revealed from the geographical map of Patiala that there were total 35 areas (wards) in the city. Among these there were 19 areas within the walled city and 26 were new colonies. Two areas each from walled city and from new colonies were selected randomly for the present study. The voters lists of these areas were procured and lists of households having male members above the age of 58 were separately drawn up. From these lists a random sample was drawn with the help of lottery method. 180 respondents were selected in total from urban areas.

Rural Sample

The criteria for the selection of the villages was their distance from the patiala city. Two types of lists of villages were prepared (i) those lying within 15 kms from patiala (ii) those located 415 kms beyond of the city. Two villages each were selected randomly from the above mentioned two lists. The voter lists of these four villages were procured and all those households were selected which had male members beyond 58 years of age. From the four villages 180 such households were found and the aged persons of these households were taken as respondents.

Owing to the very nature of the present study, personal interview was considered as the only suitable technique for drawing meaningful responses from the respondents. It enables the researchers to establish a useful rapport with the respondents. The interviews however not completely unstructured, but instead had a mixture of structured and unstructured questions.

Findings :**Health conditions**

Poor health decreases the economic and social roles of an aged person. The health problems can therefore be regarded as one of the most important problems in the old age. The respondents of the present investigation were first of all asked to mention that how would they describe their health these days? Their responses have been shown in table number-1.

Table No 1

Distribution of the respondents according to perception of their health Conditions.

Perception of health conditions	Frequency in					
	Rural area	% age	Urban areas	% age	Total	% age
On the whole good	58	32.2	57	31.7	115	31.9
Minor health problems	72	40.0	100	55.6	172	47.7
Serious health problems	36	20.0	22	12.8	58	16.2
Incapacitated	14	7.8	1	0.5	15	4.2
Total	180	100.0	180	100.0	360	100.0

This table indicates that most of the respondents from both rural and urban areas had minor health problems (i.e. 47.7% of the sample). When we compare rural and urban respondents it was found that a higher proportion at the urban aged mentioned that they had minor health problems as compared to rural aged. In rural areas a higher proportion of the respondents stated that they were incapacitated due to health or having serious health problems as compared to urban respondents. Lack of modern medical facilities in the villages and poor economic conditions might be responsible for lower health status of the villagers. Similar findings about rural and urban aged in Haryana have been reported by Punia et. al, who have found that health was perceived as normal by 67.69 per cent and 40.86 percent of urban and rural respondents respectively. 'Poor' and 'very poor' health was perceived by 33.91 percent and 12.7 percent of the rural and urban respondents respectively (Punia et. al., 1984) when the respondents were asked to report about their specific health problems they generally over looked the minor ailments and described only the serious ones. Some of the respondents might have one or the other

illness and some of the respondents reported a combination of these. The nature of physical ailments is given in table number-2.

Table No. 2.
Distribution of the respondents according to the natures of ailments

Nature of ailments	Frequency in				
	Rural areas	% age	Urban areas	% age	Total
Eye Sight	11	44.0	14	56.0	25
Pains in joints	16	66.7	8	33.3	24
Digestive complaints	5	33.3	10	66.7	15
Pains in chest	7	70.0	3	30.0	10
Heart trouble	8	57.1	6	42.9	14
Asthma	6	60.0	4	40.0	10
Breath Lessness	1	11.1	8	88.9	9
Diabetes	4	40.0	6	60.0	10
Teeth problem	2	14.3	12	85.7	14
Hard of hearing	5	100.0	0	0.0	5
Eyesight & teeth	27	51.9	25	48.1	52
T.B.	5	100.0	-	-	5
Teeth, Eyesight & pains in joints	5	16.7	25	83.3	30
Skin disease	6	75.0	2	25.0	8
Teeth, Eyesight, asthma	1	12.5	7	87.5	8
Paralysis	4	80.0	1	20.0	5
Hearing, teeth, eyesight	5	83.3	1	16.7	6
Tremors	7	100.0	-	-	7
Teeth, breath- lessness	8	47.0	9	53.0	17
Kidney trouble	9	100.0	-	-	9
Handicap	1	50.0	1	50.0	2
Not-applicable	37	49.3	38	50.7	75
Total	180		180		360

This table shows that a higher proportion of the rural respondents described the nature of ailments as kidney trouble; tremors; paralysis; T.B.; hard of hearing, joint pains, pains in chest, asthma; heart trouble etc. or a combination of these ailments as compared to urban respondents. While on the other hand, a higher proportion of the urban respondents stated digestive

complaints; breathlessness; teeth problem eye-sight and diabetes or a combination of these ailments as compared to rural respondents. Almost an equal number at respondents from both rural and urban areas stated that they did not have any kind of ailment, but this number was very small . So it can be concluded that in old age every body has one or the other ailment and some are having a combination of these. However teeth and eye-sight problems seem to be widely prevalent in both rural and urban areas.

The respondents were further asked whether they experienced any difficulty in climbing stairs, walking, boarding buses or trains; doing manual work, daily activity or any combination of these. The distribution of the respondents who stated that they faced difficulties has been presented in table number-3.

Table No. 3
Distribution of the respondents according to physical difficulties
experienced by them

Type of Physical difficulties	Frequency in					
	Rural areas	% age	Urban areas	% age	Total	% age
Climbing stairs	9	7.4	20	18.2	29	12.5
Walking	12	9.9	9	8.2	21	9.1
Doing manual work	38	31.4	18	16.4	56	24.2
Boarding trains and buses	3	2.5	2	1.8	5	2.2
Daily activity	24	19.8	8	7.3	32	13.8
Boarding trains & buses, walking and climbing stairs	20	16.5	33	30.0	53	22.9
Manual work & climbing stairs	15	12.5	20	18.2	35	15.2
Total	121	100.0	110	100.0	231	100.0

In addition to suffering from a variety of ailments the old people experienced difficulties in some of their daily activities too. This table reveals that in rural areas a higher proportion of the respondents mentioned that they faced difficulty in doing manual work; in daily activity, boarding trains and buses. On the other hand, a higher proportion of the Urban respondents stated that they faced difficulty in boarding trains and buses, walking; climbing stairs etc. From this table we find that the rural people experienced more difficulties as compared to Urban respondents, in their daily life. This shows that the

health condition of the aged in rural areas was poorer as compared to their urban counterparts.

The respondents were further asked to mention that who looked after them during illness. The responses are shown in table number-4.

Table No. 4.
Distribution of the respondents according to who looks after them during their illness

Frequency in						
Who looks after the respondents during illness	Rural areas	% age	Urban areas	% age	Total	% age
Wife	63	35.0	67	37.2	130	36.1
Wife & daughter	18	10.0	21	11.7	39	10.8
Wife & Sons	47	26.1	60	33.0	107	29.7
Sons	35	19.4	24	13.3	59	16.4
Nephews	12	6.7	2	1.1	14	3.9
Other relatives	5	2.8	6	3.3	11	3.1
Total	180	100.0	180	100.0	360	100.0

This table shows that in most of the cases from both rural and urban areas, the respondents stated that their wives and sons looked after them during their illness. In most of the cases both in rural and urban areas women's participation is higher in looking after the aged in the family. The woman might be his wife or daughter or daughter-in-law. Litman has also stated that "in case of critical or long term illness, some additional assistance may come from distantly located relatives. With both near and distant relatives care of kin is largely the work of female members. This especially holds in generationally linked families (Litman, 1971: 67-81). I do not observe a significant variation in the responses of rural and urban respondents except in the case of nephews who are mentioned by twelve of the rural respondents and only two respondents from urban areas. The greater dependence on nephews in the rural areas might be explained in terms of the greater prevalence of joint family system in the rural areas. As brothers live together in joint families and in case one of the brothers does not have a son, he may be looked after by his nephews.

The respondents were further asked whether they required any type of medical treatment. The distribution of their responses in this context is given in table number-5.

Table No. 5
Distribution of the respondents according to need for medical treatment

Frequency in						
Need for medical treatment	Rural areas	% age	Urban areas	% age	Total	% age
No treatment required	62	34.4	77	42.8	139	38.6
Occasional treatment at home or hospital	68	37.7	69	38.3	137	38.1
Regular treatment	40	22.3	30	16.7	70	19.4
Cannot afford	10	5.6	4	2.2	14	3.9

This table indicates that a higher proportion of the aged people in urban areas stated that they did not require any treatment as compared to the rural respondents. On the other hand, a higher proportion of the rural respondents stated that they required regular treatment as compared to the urban respondents. Moreover, a higher proportion of the respondents from rural areas stated that they could not afford the required treatment. This may be due to higher incidence of poor economic conditions among the villagers as compared to the Urbanites.

No doubt the older people suffer from a number of physical ailments, but the problem becomes more acute when the financial aspect is considered. Generally it becomes difficult for an old person to meet his medical expenses due to lack of sufficient financial resources. And keeping this view in their mind that they have already played their innings. Kin do not want to spend huge money on their treatment. And even in serious cases the private hospitals refuse their admission. They think that it is already a gone caste. If we will admit him and if he dies it will bring bad reputation to their hospitals. The respondents were therefore asked to mention the mode of payment of their treatment. The data in this regard is presented in table number-6.

Table No. 6
Distribution of the respondents according to the mode of payment of their treatment

Frequency in						
Who pays for your treatment	Rural areas	% age	Urban areas	% age	Total	% age
Self	59	32.7	92	51.1	151	41.9
Sons	47	26.2	12	6.7	59	16.4
Nephews	6	3.3	-	-	6	1.7
Not-applicable	68	37.8	76	4.2	144	40.0
Total	180	100.0	180	100.0	360	100.0

Table number-6 depicts that a higher proportion of the urban respondents mentioned that they were self dependent in meeting their medical expenses as compared to the rural respondents. On the other hand, a higher proportion of the rural respondents stated that they were depending on their sons, and nephews as compared to their Urban counterparts. So it is clear from this table that Urban aged are more self dependent while the rural aged persons are more dependent on their sons and other relatives.

The respondents were asked to state whether they got proper care at hospitals. Their responses are presented in table number-7.

Table No. 7

Distribution of the respondents according to their views that whether they got proper care at hospital or not

Frequency in						
Whether getting proper care at hospitals	Rural areas	% age	Urban areas	% age	Total	% age
Yes	61	33.9	7	42.8	138	38.3
No	95	52.8	85	47.2	180	50.0
Indifferent	24	13.3	18	10.0	42	11.7
Total	180	100.0	180	100.0	360	100.0

Table reveals that a higher proportion of the urban aged stated that they got proper care at hospitals as compared to rural respondents. Those respondents from both rural and urban areas who stated that they did not get proper care at hospitals supported their answers with the reasons : there is more corruption in the hospitals; no body cares without approach; no medical facility; medical machinery is not working most of the times; working of laboratories in the hospitals is not proper, so doctors recommend private laboratories for the tests which are very expensive. The hospital wards are stinking. Usually doctors refer to buy medicines from the market which is also very expensive, so it becomes difficult for an aged person to buy such costly medicines; and an other reason mentioned by many respondents was that being old they could not stand in long queues for a long time. This table also reveals that a higher proportion of rural respondents were indifferent regarding medical facilities being provided in the hospitals as compared to the urban respondents. This might be due to the fact that a large number of respondents from rural areas prefer not to go to hospitals and instead they prefer some home treatment for minor ailments.

Conclusions

The important objective of this paper was to highlight the health problems of the rural and urban aged. Keeping in view this broad objective, the study was designed to find out the differences between the rural and urban aged with regard to health conditions such as their perception about health problems, nature of ailments; physical difficulties; who looks after them during their illness; need for medical treatment; mode of payment of their treatment.

As regarding the health problems, the data revealed that a little higher proportion of the rural aged has serious health problems as compared to the urban respondents. Most of the respondents from both rural and urban areas mentioned that they were looked after during their illness by their wives, daughter-in-laws. A much higher proportion of the rural respondents reported that they were dependent on their sons or nephews for their medical expenses as compared to the urban respondents. Moreover, a majority of the rural respondents also mentioned that they did not get proper medical care at the hospitals. The number of respondents stating this difficulty in Urban areas was lesser.

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